

Blueprint for Peace

Endorsement Request

Save Lives and Dollars with Effective Solutions

We face staggering levels of violence in America and around the globe. The social and economic costs to individuals, families, and our communities can be overwhelming, and yet we have far more effective root cause solutions available than we are currently employing. We must implement policies and invest in programs, both domestically and internationally, that are proven to work, and bring them up to the scale needed to turn this devastation around.

We are asking that each of us — including elected officials, candidates, governing bodies, organizations and businesses — endorse and sign-on to this broad framework of the “Blueprint for Peace” in support of positive solutions to violence.

These proven effective solutions should be robustly implemented at local, state, federal and international levels lowering the financial and emotional cost to our country and world. *We endorse these actions as a first step:*

- **Humanize Justice Systems:** Move away from overly punitive policies, toward healing-oriented criminal and juvenile justice approaches that address underlying causes. Restorative justice, diversion/alternative incarceration programs, trauma-informed systems, and prisoner rehabilitation and re-entry programs are among the most promising solutions.
- **Empower Community Interventions:** Comprehensive activities and strategies working to address such challenges as crime, violence, gangs and healing trauma. Effective programs include a public health approach with hands-on street outreach and intervention, wrap-around services, mental health services, out-of-school programs, and police/community relations.
- **Teach Peace in Schools:** Conflict resolution curricula in our schools, using tools such as social-emotional learning, empathetic communication techniques, restorative processes, mindfulness, and other proven peacebuilding skills to increase graduation rates and transform violence, bullying, truancy, and other challenges facing youth.
- **Enhance Personal and Interpersonal Supports:** Robust resources addressing mental health, suicide prevention, domestic violence, trauma, workplace violence, life skills, parenting skills, and related areas.
- **Foster International Peace:** Peacebuilding approaches to international conflict and atrocity prevention in global hotspots through mediation, diplomacy, and effective on-the-ground programs. Important components may involve development, ecological interventions, post-conflict justice, humanitarian aid, mediation, truth and reconciliation and support for frameworks necessary for democratic processes.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Organization: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

The Positive Impact of Current Peacebuilding Solutions

There are great challenges we face and encouraging solutions before us, if we give them support. Here are a few examples:

LifeSkills Training programs have been shown to produce a \$50 benefit for every \$1 invested in terms of corrections costs, welfare and social services, drug and mental health treatment, and increased employment and tax revenue.

Physical violence have shown a decrease of 43% in high schools with life skills and conflict resolution programs and curriculum.

Re-offense rates have shown to drop from the current national average of around 65%, down to as low as 7% when Restorative Justice oriented programs are employed.

We see a 62% success rate of international peace agreements when negotiated through mediation. Only 27% of un-mediated cases are successful.

\$3.6 billion down to \$5 million: reduction of violence costs in Kenya elections (2008 to 2010) after comprehensive peacebuilding efforts.

The Tragic Costs of Violence

If we don't move the Blueprint for Peace agenda forward, these are some of the outcomes we can continue to expect:

Domestically, homicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10 to 24, seven times greater than other leading industrialized nations.

According to the World Health Organization, violence causes more than 1.6 million deaths worldwide every year and is one of the leading causes of death for persons ages 15 to 44.

In the United States we have some of the highest levels of crime and violence in the developed world and have nearly 25 percent — over 2.2 million — of its prisoners.

The U.S. spends over \$2 trillion annually on violence containment costs, or around 15 percent of our GDP.

When adding up the concrete costs to the average American taxpayer it is estimated that violence containment spending costs \$7,000 for every man, woman and child each year. That is \$6 billion a day in total, or \$246 million an hour.

Globally, there are currently 50 million refugees and asylum-seekers forcibly displaced worldwide — the highest since World War II. There are 500 million people currently living in countries at risk of instability and conflict.

Less than 2% of our income tax goes to civilian foreign affairs agencies such as USAID, State Department, U.S. Institute of Peace, Peace Corps, etc.; meanwhile, 39% or more goes to the military.

And yet, research has indicated that investing early to prevent conflicts from escalating into violent crises is, on average, 60 times more cost effective than intervening after violence erupts.

The challenges we face clearly demand we shift our investments, and prioritize legislation toward the efforts we know work, time is short. Thankfully, solutions are at hand.

We urge you to be part of the answer by endorsing this important step in support of the Blueprint for Peace.

For more specific exploration of solutions in all of these areas, visit:

www.peacealliance.org/cornerstones

For statistical sources, visit: <https://peacealliance.org/tools-education/statistics-on-violence/>