

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 130

WHEREAS, in recent years, our country has been plagued by senseless and devastating mass shootings victimizing numerous innocent persons, and their families, friends, loved ones, and communities; and

WHEREAS, with each horrific act, we all grieve the immeasurable losses suffered by the families, friends, loved ones, and communities of the fallen, and search for ways to keep our families and communities safe; and

WHEREAS, the facts underlying those tragedies are varied and complex, and reveal myriad contributing factors, including, among others, imperfections in the delivery of mental health and addictive behavior services; and

WHEREAS, as I have stated before, each life is precious and with the right approach and broad spectrum of care and treatment opportunities, individuals living with mental health and addiction can turn their lives around with dignity, bringing peace of mind and hope to themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, for their own safety and to help make New Jersey a better place for everyone, individuals living with mental health and addiction should be encouraged to seek help and not suffer under the shadow of the stigma of mental health illness; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive look at violence in today's society must also include a consideration of violence in the media; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the foregoing, on January 17, 2013, I ordered the creation of a New Jersey SAFE Task Force on Gun Protection, Addiction, Mental Health and Families, and Education Safety ("NJ SAFE Task Force") to conduct a comprehensive, balanced, and well-informed review of the root causes of mass violence; and

WHEREAS, the NJ SAFE Task Force provided thoughtful recommendations regarding how mass violence might be effectively addressed in its report released on April 10, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the NJ SAFE Task Force specifically recommended the creation of a standing interagency working group to consider the many long-term issues raised by their study;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The creation of a Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group to serve as an interagency, multi-disciplinary working group focused on decreasing violence, promoting safer and healthier communities, and highlighting the importance of de-stigmatizing mental illness, while encouraging early intervention.

2. The Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group shall:

a. Consist of the following cabinet members, or their designees: the Attorney General; the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families; the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections; the Commissioner of the Department of Education; the Commissioner of the Department of Health; the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services; and the following non-cabinet members, or their designees: the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Chairman of the State Parole Board; and any other members representing other State agencies or private partners as I may so designate in the future, all of whom shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

b. Be chaired by the Attorney General or his designee. The Department of Law and Public Safety shall provide staff support to the Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group. The Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group shall be authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this State to supply it with any information, personnel, or other assistance available as the Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group deems necessary to discharge its duties under this Order. Each department, office, division, and agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate fully with the Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group to furnish such assistance on as timely a basis as is necessary to accomplish the purpose of this Order. The Mental Health and Community Safety

Working Group may consult with professionals, experts, or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission;

c. Perform a variety of duties including, but not limited to:

i. Develop strategies with respect to prevention and intervention, including, but not limited to, educating youth, parents, and teachers about the warning signs of violence and the negative consequences felt by teens and young people who are ostracized, isolated, and experience despair;

ii. Develop a public information campaign utilizing all forms of media, communications, and technology to better inform New Jersey residents about the broad range of programs and services available in the community as well as encourage individuals to seek help and no longer suffer under the shadow of the stigma of mental health illness;

iii. Focus on strategies to facilitate workforce expansion in, among other professions, licensed clinical social workers, nursing, and psychiatry, while also encouraging such professionals in those and similar disciplines to work in the public or community health systems;

iv. Examine whether violent media is inappropriately marketed to young people in our State, and develop a plan to educate parents on how to make healthy media choices for their children;

v. Monitor implementation of the "S.W.A.P." Program, which is an initiative proposed by the Department of Education and the Office of the Attorney General, to be administered by the New Jersey State Police, whereby the New Jersey State Police conducts unannounced safety visits to local schools in districts located in municipalities without municipal police forces and are thus patrolled by the New Jersey State Police;

vi. Advise the Governor from time to time and as necessary on matters related to the Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group's mission.

d. All members shall serve without compensation.

e. The Mental Health and Community Safety Working Group shall organize as soon as practicable.

3. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
19th day of April,
Two Thousand and Thirteen, and
of the Independence of the
United States, the Two Hundred
and Thirty-Seventh.

[seal]

/s/Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/Charles B. McKenna

Chief Counsel to the Governor