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RAOUL, U.S. SECRET SERVICE HOST TRAINING AIMED AT PREVENTING TARGETED SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center Provides Training to Prevent Targeted Acts of Violence in Illinois Schools

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today partnered with the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) and the Lake County State's Attorney's office in hosting a training designed to prevent targeted acts of violence in schools. The event is part of a series of trainings on behavioral threat assessment that are presented by the NTAC to help prevent mass casualty attacks.

Participants in today's training had the option of joining virtually or attending in person at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois. Attendees included educators, school and district administrators, school counselors and psychologists, school resource officers, mental health specialists, social workers, law enforcement officers and others who may be involved in risk detection or risk management. The Attorney General's office and the NTAC have collaborated since 2019 to provide threat assessment trainings to public and private entities around Illinois. Using research and case studies from past mass attacks in public spaces, the trainings provide recommendations to help faith leaders, educators, law enforcement officials, prosecutors and others identify, assess and intervene with individuals who exhibit concerning or threatening behaviors.

"Keeping our schools safe cannot fall to law enforcement alone. A collaborative approach is critical and must involve administrators, security officers, counselors and teachers – the individuals who interact with students regularly and may be in a position to intervene if a student shows signs of being in crisis," Attorney General Kwame Raoul said. "My office is proud to partner with the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center to ensure that school officials have access to behavioral threat assessment training that can help avert an unimaginable tragedy – before it occurs."

The training today highlighted past mass tragedies at schools in the United States. NTAC officials also presented relevant findings and recommendations based on the NTAC's latest research on targeted violence and school attacks that have been averted in the U.S. Additionally, participants learned about the role communities can play in using a multidisciplinary approach to identifying, assessing and intervening with students exhibiting concerning or threatening behaviors as early as possible.

"We at the National Threat Assessment Center are privileged and honored to be in steadfast partnership with the local communities and leaders of Illinois in equipping our nation's schools and communities with the best practices and tools to prevent targeted school violence," said National Threat Assessment Center Chief Dr. Lina Alathari. "Our research provides guidance for school leaders, educators, and staff enabling them to identify, assess and provide appropriate intervention for a student in distress or exhibiting concerning behavior, thereby ensuring the safety of the student and school community."

For more than 20 years, the NTAC has conducted research on the thinking and behaviors of those who commit targeted acts of violence in an effort to prevent future acts. The NTAC has found that attacks took place in a variety of locations, including businesses and workplaces, schools, places of worship, military bases, open spaces, housing complexes, and on forms of transportation. In its yearly "Mass Attacks in Public Spaces" report, most recently issued in 2020, the NTAC found that most of the attackers used firearms, nearly half of which were possessed illegally during the attack. The report also found many attackers had

experienced unemployment, substance abuse, mental health issues or recent stressful events. Attackers also had a history of prior criminal charges or arrests and domestic violence. Additionally, the report found that most of the attackers had exhibited behavior that raised concerns other individuals, causing many of those people to fear for their own safety or that of others.

The Secret Service recommends a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention, called behavioral threat assessment. The goal is to proactively identify individuals who display threatening behavior and intervene prior to violence occurring, which requires a community-based approach. According to the NTAC, faith-based leaders, mental health professionals, workplace managers, law enforcement officers and school personnel play essential roles in threat assessment.

The trainings are part of Attorney General Raoul's work to address violence throughout Illinois. In addition to working with local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to increase awareness of Illinois' red flag law, Raoul has worked with other law enforcement agencies to address gaps in the state's FOID card system. The Attorney General's office supported a law that was signed in 2021 to expand background checks and require the Illinois State Police (ISP) to confiscate firearms from individuals whose FOID cards have been revoked. Raoul's office also prosecutes individuals who lie on FOID card applications, collaborates with local law enforcement to combat gun trafficking and uses the office's jurisdiction to prosecute multi-county gun trafficking offenses.

The Attorney General's office, in collaboration with Everytown for Gun Safety, created a state-of-the-art crime-gun tracing database, Crime Gun Connect. The database will be housed at the ISP and will serve an investigative tool accessible only by Illinois law enforcement officials and collects data related crime gun tracing performed in the state of Illinois since 2009. The Attorney General's office filled in the gap and has conducted law enforcement trainings to increase awareness and usage of the new database. Nationally, Attorney General Raoul successfully partnered with Everytown for Gun Safety and the city of Kansas City to get the federal firearm license of an unscrupulous arms manufacturer revoked.

In addition to supporting law enforcement, the Attorney General's office supports victims' service providers around Illinois that support trauma informed services for crime victims and their families. Raoul's Crime Victims Services Division administers a host of programs and services to assist survivors of violent crime. For instance, the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation program offers reimbursement for expenses incurred by eligible victims as a result of a violent crime. More information is available on the [Attorney General's website](#).