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District Attorney's Office Update –August 2017

Juvenile Justice – The office now has a distinct Juvenile Justice Unit with dedicated, experienced, and diligent attorneys who have committed to staying in the unit and working with the community and our court system to provide alternatives for youth who are beginning to get involved in criminal activity. We are expanding our juvenile diversion program to include restorative justice circles which will include volunteer community members. We are starting a pilot program to expand the diversion program to young adults. This work leads to significant crime prevention.

Bond Hearings - My predecessor did not have deputy district attorneys appearing at First Advisements for people being held in jail for investigation of criminal activity. This is a critical stage in criminal proceedings because this is when bond conditions are set! DA McCann changed this immediately. Now a more thorough and reasoned result can be reached when people appear in court for the first time and more people can be released early on PR bonds.

Elder Abuse - DA McCann established a new elder abuse unit in the office to handle the increasing number of crimes against the elderly. She worked in conjunction with the Denver Police Department that started a detective unit dedicated to investigating these crimes.

Behavioral Health Unit – This is a newly revamped unit to examine the complicated and timely issue of the intersection of mental health, substance abuse and the criminal justice system. This team is working to provide appropriate alternatives for the many folks in the criminal justice system who suffer from substance abuse addiction and mental health issues. We are hoping to receive a grant for the LEAD program to divert people with drug addictions out of the criminal justice system before charges are brought.

Community Involvement – DA McCann has encouraged her deputy district attorneys to attend neighborhood meetings to hear concerns and questions from community members. Hardly a week goes by that the DA is not at a community meeting. She has also fulfilled a campaign promise by holding a community meeting when a fatal police shooting occurred and no charges were filed. She will continue to honor that promise.

Mass Incarceration, particularly of people of color - DA McCann is troubled by the impact of the criminal justice system on communities of color. She distributed the book, *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander, to every member of her staff. She brought in a professor from DU Law School to facilitate internal discussions about this book with her staff. Another DU Law professor conducted cultural competency training for the office. She is also bringing in a professor from UCD to analyze racial and ethnic data within the office to ensure that justice is being fairly administered.

Sexual Assault – The DA's office has a grant that enables it to have one deputy DA focus on the intake of sexual assault cases to ensure consistency and to provide advice to sexual assault detectives. The office participates in a campus sexual assault working group and the office has applied for a grant to expand our work regarding sexual assault on campuses.

Community Advisory Councils – DA McCann has organized three community advisory councils to provide input and feedback on community issues on these topics: police/community relations, immigration, and mental health.

Domestic Violence – This issue remains a priority for the office. The office has one dedicated prosecutor who reviews all the cases for filing and provides advice to the detectives. She lectures frequently on this topic. She is working on a plan to enforce the bill DA McCann passed as a legislator to require domestic violence offenders to relinquish guns.

Crime Intelligence Data – The Denver DA’s office works in close cooperation with the ATF and DPD investigators using a sophisticated tracking system that tracks shell casings nationally and matches them to guns used in criminal activity. Denver police officers are able to recover many shell casings through Shot Spotter. Denver is recognized as a national leader in solving cases through the use of this technology. The office has also secured a grant-filled position for data collection and analysis in gun-related investigations and prosecutions.

Immigration – The DA joined other city officials in asking ICE not to arrest people in the courthouse. She met with the Mexican Consul General to discuss issues facing non-citizens in Denver. The office now signs U-Visa certifications for those who cooperate with law enforcement in the prosecution of cases. The DA is considering a policy to allow immigration status to be considered in plea bargain offers.

Human Trafficking – DA McCann has made prosecution of these cases a priority. She will be appointing a full time deputy district attorney to handle these cases once the funding is secured. The office has a PhD candidate who is an expert in this issue who is working with DPD and the community to examine how we can better address this issue.

Bias/Hate Motivated Crimes – DA McCann established a team of attorneys to specialize in the filing and prosecution of these cases. She has participated in various presentations regarding the importance of reporting and prosecuting these vicious crimes.

Internal Improvements – DA McCann developed performance reviews for attorneys which have now been completed. She and her top staff will be meeting with every attorney to discuss goals and feedback. She made some internal changes to increase the productivity of the office and is working on a better system for collecting internal data.

Grants – DA McCann has been instrumental in securing grants for the office to assist in prosecution and justice. One grant is allowing for the use of restorative justice in appropriate juvenile cases. Another is allowing for the use of adult diversion in selected cases. Her office, in cooperation with several other city agencies, is in line to receive a large state grant to establish a juvenile assessment center to include housing for youth who should not be placed in detention but who cannot return home – a desperately needed facility – which will be modeled on successful facilities in surrounding communities. A grant application is also pending to allow expansion of prosecution of sexual assault on campuses.

National Criminal Justice Reform - DA McCann was honored to be invited to join a small group of progressive major city district attorneys from throughout the country who are examining ways to improve our criminal justice system. She was also asked to participate in “The Executive Session” which is sponsored by the John Jay College of Law and consists of selected district attorneys and experts in the criminal justice field. This group is looking at ways to improve criminal justice from bail reform to alternatives to incarceration.