

NEWS NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Beverly H. Young or
Anthony D. Diallo
(202) 671-2135

Department Of Corrections and Metropolitan Police Department Launch Program To Reduce Unsolved Crimes

(Washington, D.C.)--- The District of Columbia Department of Corrections Director, Devon Brown, announced today that the Department of Corrections (DOC) has launched a new initiative in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) aimed at combating crime through the closure of unsolved criminal cases. The program involves the issuance of specially designed decks of playing cards which contain information about unsolved homicides, missing children, and violent robbery offenses to the DOC inmate population at the jail and halfway houses.

These cases are often referred to as “cold cases.” Cold cases are typically those cases that have been investigated by a MPD detective for approximately three years, exhausting reasonable leads, without making a solid arrest. The case remains open and is transferred to the Major Case/Cold Case Unit of the police department for continued efforts at resolution.

Emphasizing the significant impact that this project will exert on public safety, Director Brown stated, “This is a highly important initiative for the department as it allows us to collaborate with our law enforcement partners in the police department by employing additional strategies geared toward closing cases that have remained open or ‘cold’ for extended periods.” Director Brown continued, “It is well recognized that criminals know best the identities and workings of those who commit crimes. Inasmuch as penal facilities by their very nature contain a critical mass of such individuals, it stands to reason that the correctional profession is uniquely positioned to serve as a major resource in the prevention and solving of crime. This initiative is the first of its kind within the District and serves as a striking example of the contributions that the corrections profession can make in protecting our communities.”

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The specially designed decks of playing cards will contain detailed information about the most recent local cold cases, including descriptions of the crime and a picture of the victim(s), along with the availability of a reward up to \$25,000 to anyone who can provide credible information leading to the conviction of those responsible for the offenses.

The employment of this technique is currently being utilized by several states through grant funding first made available by outgoing Senator Joseph Bruno (R-N.Y.). It has reportedly yielded positive results particularly in Florida where several criminal cases have been solved through tips from prisoners who been issued the special playing cards as part of their recreational activities.

The District of Columbia Department of Corrections currently has approximately 3,200 inmates under its control and processes over 18,000 intakes annually. It is the largest local detention system in the region and is regarded by the National Institute of Corrections as a component of the country's "Large Jail Network."

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