



PA House of Representatives
Republican Policy Committee

414, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 260-6144

Rep. Joshua D. Kail
Chairman

PA House Republican Policy Committee Hearing
“Keeping Our Communities Safe from Increasing Crime”

October 12, 2023, at 10 a.m.

Northampton Township Building
55 Township Rd.
Richboro, PA 18954

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| 10:00 a.m. | Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance |
| | Bucks County Crime Trends |
| 10:10 a.m. | Jennifer Schorn
<i>First Assistant District Attorney, Bucks County District Attorney’s Office</i> |
| 10:15 a.m. | Fred Harran
<i>Sheriff, Bucks County</i> |
| 10:20 a.m. | Questions for the Bucks County Crime Trends Panel |
| | Public Safety Perspectives |
| 10:50 a.m. | William McVey
<i>Director of Public Safety, Bensalem Police Department</i> |
| 10:55 a.m. | Steven LeCompte
<i>Chief of Police, Northampton Township Police Department</i> |
| 11:00 a.m. | Dominic Varacallo
<i>Chief of Police, Upper Southampton Police Department</i> |
| 11:05 a.m. | Rudolph P. Muller, Jr.
<i>Regional Director, Supply Chain Security, Bimbo Bakeries</i> |
| 11:10 a.m. | Questions for the Public Safety Perspectives Panel |
| 11:40 a.m. | Closing Comments |



Testifier Biographies

PA House of Representatives Policy Committee Hearing *"Keeping Our Communities Safe from Increasing Crime"*



Jennifer Schorn **First Assistant District Attorney, Bucks County District Attorney's Office**

Jennifer Schorn is currently the First Assistant District Attorney in the Bucks County District Attorney's Office. She has been a prosecutor with the Bucks County District Attorney's Office since 1999. Prior to becoming First Assistant she was Chief of Trials, Chief of Major Crimes and Chief of the Special Victims' Unit. She was the Chief of the Investigative Grand Jury from 2009-2022.

During the course of her career, she has prosecuted cases that include murder, cold-case homicide, human trafficking, child physical and sexual abuse, domestic abuse, elder abuse, and related crimes.

Fred Harran **Sheriff, Bucks County**

Sheriff Harran, originally from New York, moved to Pennsylvania in 1982, where he received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science. He earned his Master's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from St. Joseph's University. He is also a graduate of the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command.



Sheriff Harran had served in law enforcement with the Bensalem Township Police Department in Bucks County, Pennsylvania for 35 years and was the Director of Public Safety for the last 16 years there. As Director, he was responsible for the management and operation of the police department and for the coordination of the township's Fire and Rescue departments. In 2021 he was elected as the Sheriff of Bucks County, PA

He currently serves on many law enforcement and community boards and organizations, including; Chairman of the Bucks County Chiefs of Police Association Executive Board, Chairman of the Bucks County Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition, Chairman of the County Emergency Response Team Board, Executive Board of the Delaware Valley Crime Commission, IACP Forensic Science Committee, the Bucks County Domestic Violence Coalition and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission. He served on the Bureau of Justice Assistance Sexual Assault Committee. He has recently been appointed by the FBI to the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Biology DNA Interpretation and Reporting Committee Rapid DNA Task Group. He was elected to the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Executive Board representing Southeastern Pennsylvania and to State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP) and represented Pennsylvania and served as Chairman of the North Atlantic Region of the United States.

Sheriff Harran is a published author of multiple articles including Property Crime and DNA Databases which have been featured in National Police Magazines. He was instrumental in implementing the first countywide local DNA database in the United States. He has also written and received grants in excess of 19 million dollars.

Fred Harran **Sheriff, Bucks County (cont.)**

Sheriff Harran lectures nationally on a variety of issues including DNA, current drug trends and initiatives, school based and community prevention programs, grant writing and funding sources. He has received over 40 awards and citations for his work in both law enforcement and in the community. He has received the Bucks County Law Enforcement Educator Award and the Bensalem Township Officer of the Year Award. In 2015 and 2021, he was honored with the IACP August Vollmer Excellence in Forensic Science Award.

Sheriff Harran is also a member of many community organizations and resides in Bristol Boro.



William McVey **Director of Public Safety, Bensalem Police Department**

Director McVey joined Bensalem Township Police Department in 1998. He has spent the past 25 years in varying roles within the Department. He has been a member of the command staff for the past nine years and was promoted to Director in January of 2022.

In his role as Public Safety Director, McVey is responsible for the management and operation of the Police Department, Bensalem Fire Rescue, and the coordination of Township Volunteer companies and Emergency Medical Services.

In addition to his duties as Director, McVey serves as the Vice President of the PA Southeastern Chiefs of Police Association, an Executive Board Member of the PA Chiefs of Police Association, an Executive Board Member of the Bucks County Chiefs of Police Association, and is President of the Bucks County Hero Scholarship Fund.

Director McVey has a Master's degree from St. Joseph's University. He is also a graduate of the PERF's Senior Management Institute for Police and Northwestern University's School of Police and Command.

Steven LeCompte **Chief of Police, Northampton Township Police Department**

Northampton Township Chief of Police, Steven LeCompte, has been a police officer since 1983. He started his career with Northampton Township in 1989. During his lengthy career some of his duties have included: Adopt-A-Cop Officer, Use of Force Instructor, Negotiations Coordinator for South Central SERT Team, Sergeant and Lieutenant. Notable awards include: Officer of the Year, Distinguished Service Award, Unit Citation, and Life Saving Awards from; PA Chiefs Association, Bucks County Commissioners and Bucks County FOP.

Chief LeCompte received his Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from St. Joseph's University, with additional training including Northwestern University School of Police Command, FBI School for Police Executives, and Penn State's Municipal Leadership School.





Dominic Varacallo **Chief of Police, Upper Southampton Police** **Department**

Dominic began his law enforcement career in 1994, working for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) as a transit police officer. In 1997, he was hired by Warminster Township and continued his career in Bucks County, where he has spent most of his life.

Throughout his 25 years of service in Warminster, Dominic has held the rank of Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant. His experiences have provided him with opportunities not only to grow and develop as he advanced through the ranks of the department, but also the privilege in supervising and leading many great people.

Dominic has a Master's degree in Public Safety from Saint Joseph's University and he graduated from Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command in 2008. Currently, Dominic also serves as an adjunct instructor for the Criminal Justice Department at Delaware Valley University.

Rudolph P. Muller, Jr. **Regional Director, Supply Chain Security, Bimbo Bakeries**

Rudolph "Rudy" P. Muller, Jr. is a corporate security professional specializing in supply chain security, with experience in general investigations, security management, and special event operations. He is a Licensed Private Detective in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and a Certified A.L.I.C.E. Training Instructor (Active Shooter Response).

Rudy directs the Loss Prevention Supply Chain Security Program for Bimbo Bakeries, USA. Since 2005 he has consulted, conducted and/or managed over one thousand five hundred (1,500) projects and/or investigations in over thirty-five (35) states. Identifying, analyzing, and mitigating loss and theft of equipment and product. Since 2022 Rudy has also been involved with assisting sales teams and operations with property security and threat assessments and acting as a liaison to law enforcement agencies involving the catalytic convertor thefts on a regional and national level.

Rudy is the past Director of Operations and School Security for Nazareth Academy High School, Philadelphia, PA. and is a 24-year Law Enforcement Veteran having honorably served in the capacity of a Prosecution Detective for the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, State Drug Task Force Officer (TFO) for the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, and Police Officer for the City of Philadelphia, Borough of Ivyland and Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Rudy is a graduate of class PA-X "Top Gun" of the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center Undercover Drug Law Enforcement Training for Investigators and Prosecutors, he holds Undergraduate Certificates in Basic and Advanced Analytical Investigative Techniques through Southeastern Public Safety Institute St. Petersburg College, and a Diploma in Municipal Police Training/ Criminal Justice through Montgomery County Community College.

Memberships include the Pennsylvania Association of Licensed Investigators, New Jersey Licensed Private Investigators Association, Loss Prevention Committee New Jersey Food Council, County Detectives Association of Pennsylvania, Police Chiefs Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, International Police Association Pennsylvania Region 13, and Fraternal Order of Police Philadelphia Lodge 5.

2023 Crime Trends

- Residential theft from and theft of vehicles
- Residential burglaries
- Catalytic converter thefts
- Frauds and scams – targeting senior citizens
- Organized retail crimes
- Crash cases / impaired drivers / road rage
- Gun crimes / armed robberies
- Drug crimes
- Domestic violence
- Child sexual abuse crimes / online predators
- Child physical abuse crimes
- Child murders (fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine toxicity), physical abuse

Talking Points

Bucks County is an amazing place to live. With over 600,000 people nestled in small towns along the Delaware River from Bristol Brough to New Hope - and beyond, the population is served by various businesses, shopping districts, and the #1 Casino in the country. Known for its natural beauty, its proximity to the bordering cities of New York and Philadelphia makes it a great place to live and work.

However, these big cities can pose problems for our county, specifically Philadelphia, which sits on our southern border and has experienced major crime increases in the last year. The lawlessness and civil unrest present there have had a direct effect on Bucks County. Last year alone, Bucks County experienced major increases in crime overall; up by 22.7% in robbery, 17.1% in sexual assault, 32.9% in burglary, 21.8% in theft, and 30.6% in auto theft, for a 18.7% total increase in major crimes.

When people riot and destroy Philadelphia, Bucks County must be prepared. You often hear the phrase "Crime knows no borders," – and it is true in this situation. When individuals riot and destroy in Philadelphia, they tend to work their way north.

The problem does not end there. Police, sheriff, and corrections departments continue to see a reduced number of law enforcement applicants, making it difficult to staff and protect our communities. Drugs continue to be on the rise fueled by open borders in our country. The ease of American citizens to get drugs is beyond the human imagination. New drugs like Xylazine, AKA as TRANQ, its street name, are increasingly prevalent and plaguing communities everywhere.

Not only has this problem directly affected the crime rate and law enforcement response, but detox today is more prolonged since these drugs have more profound effects, attacking every organ in the human body. This results in extended hospital stays and treatment of approximately 7 days, if not longer, as compared to the 72-hour detox commonly occurring in the past.

How does all this affect the criminal justice system?

Due to short-staffed jails and liability concerns across our government agencies, police are often faced with watching prisoners prior to incarceration. Not only are these costs extensive, but it forces police to be taken off the street, stopping them from preventing crime and, worse yet, responding to your 911 Call.

We in Bucks County law enforcement hold the line against crime as best as possible. When Philadelphia criminals commit crimes in Bucks County, their reception is much different; they are arrested, prosecuted, and, if convicted, they go to jail.

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System 2021 compared to 2022

<https://www.ucr.pa.gov/PAUCRSPUBLIC/Home/Index>

Pennsylvania **2022/2021**

Robbery	increase	13.7%
Assault	increase	2.6%
Burglary	increase	5.9%
Theft	increase	22.1%
Auto Theft	increase	27.7%
TOTAL PART 1	increase	12.7%

Bucks County, Pennsylvania

Robbery	increase	22.7%
Sexual Assault	increase	17.1%
Burglary	increase	32.9%
Assault	increase	7.7%
Theft	increase	21.8%
Auto Theft	increase	30.6%
TOTAL PART 1	increase	18.7%

Director William McVey:

Director McVey joined Bensalem Township Police Department in 1998. He has spent the past 25 years in varying roles within the Department. He has been a member of the command staff for the past nine years and was promoted to Director in January of 2022. In his role as Public Safety Director, McVey is responsible for the management and operation of the Police Department, Bensalem Fire Rescue, and the coordination of Township Volunteer companies and Emergency Medical Services. In addition to his duties as Director, McVey serves as the Vice President of the PA Southeastern Chiefs of Police Association, an Executive Board Member of the PA Chiefs of Police Association, an Executive Board Member of the Bucks County Chiefs of Police Association, and is President of the Bucks County Hero Scholarship Fund. Director McVey has a Master's degree from St. Joseph's University. He is also a graduate of the PERF's Senior Management Institute for Police and Northwestern University's School of Police and Command.

Bensalem Township:

Bensalem Township is an area of 21 square miles and border the City of Philadelphia. Our current population is just shy of 65,000 residents. However, there is an estimated daytime population of 250,000.

Bensalem Township Police Department:

Bensalem Township Police Department is recognized as one of the premier law enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania. We have over 100 sworn officers. We are the largest municipality and police department in Bucks County and we are internationally accredited through CALEA and state accredited through PLEAC. Bensalem Police Department is the only department in Bucks County to have the gold standard of CALEA Certification.

Crime in Bensalem Township:

Over the past several years, the Bensalem Township Police Department averages in excess of 60,000 calls for service per year. On average, Bensalem Police Officers stop between 10,000 and 14,000 vehicles each year. These vehicular stops are a great tool to enhance safety, detect crime, and deter crime. Bensalem Police handle over 3,000 criminal arrests per year and roughly 40% of our arrestees are Philadelphia residents.

In 2022, there were 3,164 crimes reported in Bensalem Township. This was an overall reduction from 2021. Of the crimes committed in 2022, 2,140 were Part 1 crimes (these include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson). These are the more serious crimes that we track and continually monitor. Unfortunately, our Part 1 crimes rose 24% in 2022 compared to 2021. This trend has steadily continued in Bensalem over the past five years. The clearance rate for Part 1 crimes in Bensalem was 32%. We are proud of our clearance rates but that's not the answer. We need to stop the

lawlessness, keep firearms out of the hands of felons, and ensure that criminals who commit property crimes are held accountable.

Lawlessness:

There is currently a sense of lawlessness that I have never seen over my 25-year career in policing. We just saw it on the news after a Philadelphia judge dismissed charges against a Phila Officer. This led to instant looting and lawlessness. On a regular basis though, this can be seen by the large car crowds that instantly organize and overtake an area. They wreak havoc on a community and often leave a trail of destruction. Or the ATV riders who tear up fields and properties and overrun the streets. Both groups create a serious hazard for law abiding motorists and the general public. There appears to no longer be a fear of consequence and society as a whole has suffered.

The picture is even clearer when we look at the numbers for fleeing and eluding cases in Bensalem. To date this year, we have had 64 drivers decide to flee when an officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop. This is an increase of over 3000% from 2019 when we had two cases of fleeing and eluding police. It's an 88% increase since this time last year in 2022 when we had 34 cases. These cases exemplify the increasing lawlessness that we are experiencing on the street and put everyone on the roadway at risk. The escalating numbers of people fleeing from marked police cars is a clear sign that respect for the law has diminished and our communities as a result are less safe.

Illegal Firearms:

Bensalem experienced a 75% increase over the past two years in illegal guns recovered. We seized 174 firearms over that period. More distressing, is the fact that we have arrested 21 convicted felons for illegally possessing a firearm this year (2023). These are the people who should never possess a firearm. They have lost that right. When an officer removes a gun from a felon, they may have saved a future life or prevented a future tragedy. The problem is, without strong penalties, these felons are often released and go back to carrying and using illegal firearms. Many of these felons were arrested after being stopped on a car stop by an officer for a minor offense. Many are from Philadelphia, in some cases out on bail for illegal gun charges or violent crime. In one particular case the suspect was a convicted felon for a homicide and was wanted by Phila PD for an armed robbery. When a convicted felon is arrested for illegally possessing a firearm, the consequence needs to be prison.

Property Crimes:

Like most suburban towns, Bensalem is affected most by property crimes. These include burglary, theft from autos, and retail theft. Our Township experienced significant rises in property crime in 2022. Specifically, theft from auto rose 32% (the majority of that being Catalytic Convertors, burglary rose over 100% (due to multiple storage unit burglaries), and retail theft rose 25%.

Conclusion:

Recently I have written two pieces, with the latter being published in Real Clear Politics and other publications. The first, was the “Philly Effect on Suburban Towns” and the second was “Dangers of Driver Equity Laws.” In both of these pieces, I outlined the negative impact towns like Bensalem are dealing with due to the ineffective and dangerous policies of Philadelphia. Some of the main factors are the Driving Equity Ordinance, which strips police of their ability to enforce the law, the decriminalization of crimes like retail theft, and the catch and release bail system currently in place by the Philadelphia DA’s Office. Without a system of justice that holds criminals accountable and also places more focus on the victims of crime, we will continue to be plagued by what we are seeing play out now on our streets.

Mail Thefts and related Fraud in Northampton Township (2021 – present)

Northampton Township is a community of about 40,000 residents located approx. 3 miles east of Philadelphia County.

In the last 2 ½ years we have had a 26% increase in Part 1 Crimes; during the same time period we had seen over a 600% increase in mail thefts. This increase is the primarily reason for our increase in frauds. Unfortunately, we know that the actual increase in mail thefts is much higher because this crime is often unreported. These numbers are startling but cannot accurately depict the level of victimization and inconvenience that these crimes have had on our residents.

In 2021 we investigated (8) mail thefts and (3) frauds from mail thefts. There were (16) victims. Total losses: \$29,633.00

In 2022 we investigated (50) mail thefts and (46) frauds from mail thefts. There were (102) victims. Total Losses: \$455,697.00

So far this year we investigated (45) mail thefts and (12) frauds from mail thefts. There were (64) victims. At the current rate of mail thefts, we will be up to 57 mail thefts this year. Total Losses (YTD) \$130,639.00

A typical mail theft involves multiple victims because thieves steal mail from many mailboxes, and sometimes US mailboxes, before they leave the area. Thieves are commonly looking for checks that they can wash, copy or alter. (YouTube) Unwanted stolen mail often ends up on the side of a roadway, trash can, or in a storm sewer. These thefts are often handled as one incident and generate one UCR number, which is why the problem is much bigger than many people realize. The problem is so serious that we told our residents to take their mail into the post office to prevent theft. We even told our community to avoid using US mailboxes outside of the Post Office because thieves were stealing mail out of the mailboxes. The integrity of the US mail service is at risk.

Victim Impact: loss of mail, late fees for unpaid bills, forced to close bank accounts, unable to use their local mailbox, financial losses for victims and banks, and identity theft concerns.

Northampton Arrests:

In 2022 we arrested a female from Phila. for theft of a package from a porch. She plead guilty. We made a second arrest for check fraud after a subject from Phila. was paid \$500.00 dollars and drugs by an organized group of suspects in Phila. to cash numerous altered stolen checks. This suspect was arrested and plead guilty.

In 2023 we arrested (2) subjects, one from New York and other from North Carolina after they were observed stealing mail from mailboxes. Subjects were arrested after a brief pursuit. (37) stolen checks were found in the headliner of the vehicle. Additional discarded mail was found in area. Case is scheduled for trial.

Mail theft is often an Organized Criminal Act and grading of offense should reflect the serious impact that it has had on our businesses and residents. Mail Carriers from all over the United States have been robbed of their arrow keys, which are used to open US mailboxes. It is important that local police investigate thefts and frauds and charge suspects; Postal Inspectors do not have the staffing to investigate the majority of mail thefts. A \$100,000. Dollar loss/theft is the minimum amount a Postal Inspector needs before bringing a case to a US Attorney for approval of an investigation and prosecution. This makes mail thefts a state and local problem.

Strong Legislation that addresses this growing problem will increase public awareness while helping to deter criminal acts.



255 Business Center Drive
Horsham, PA 19044

Rudolph “Rudy” P. Muller, Jr. is a corporate security professional specializing in supply chain security, with experience in general investigations, security management, and special event operations. He is a Licensed Private Detective in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and a Certified A.L.I.C.E. Training Instructor (Active Shooter Response).

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Rudy is the past Director of Operations and School Security for Nazareth Academy High School, Philadelphia, PA. and is a 24-year Law Enforcement Veteran having honorably served in the capacity of a Prosecution Detective for the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, State Drug Task Force Officer (TFO) for the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office, and Police Officer for the City of Philadelphia, Borough of Ivyland and Philadelphia Housing Authority.

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255 Business Center Drive
Horsham, PA 19044

Bimbo Bakeries, USA (BBU) is the largest commercial baking company in the United States. We deliver our bread, bagels, buns, English muffins and sweet baked goods to every town, city, and community in the United States of America. Our corporate headquarters is in Horsham Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

- Bimbo Bakeries, USA is part of Grupo Bimbo, the world's largest baking company with operations in 34 countries.
- 80 percent of U.S houses have a BBU product in them.
- Our brands include Arnold, Ball Park, Beefsteak, Bimbo, Brownberry, Entenmann's, Lender's, Little Bites, Bays, Marinela, Maier's, Thomas', Boboli, Sara Lee, The Cheesecake Factory at Home, Mrs Baird's, Heiner's, Emmy's, Grandma Sycamore's, Ti Rosa, Stroehmann, Nature's Harvest, Freihofer's, Wholesome Harvest, Goldminer, The Rustik Oven, Grace Baking, San Luis Sourdough, Alfaro's, Tenderflake, Oroweat.
- BBU has over 20,000 associates across the U.S that work in bakeries, sales, and distribution centers, on routes and in support functions.
- We have over 59 bakeries, 11,000 plus routes, and over 700 sales centers throughout the U.S.
- BBU donates over 20 million pounds of food to Feeding America agencies across the U.S. and that does not include various other organizations, churches, food banks and food pantries.
- BBU was deemed an essential business during the COVID pandemic.

Operations in Pennsylvania

- 25 Counties out of 67 Counties
- 8 Plants
- 4 Distribution Centers
- 23 Sales Centers
- In addition, garages, offices, parking lots, test kitchens, storage, and land



Catalytic Converter Thefts January 1, 2021 to date

- 1385 thefts nationwide \$4,702,670.06
- 170 thefts in Pennsylvania \$416,959.37
- Average cost per theft in Pennsylvania \$2,438.36
- Some parts are replaced in house
- Some parts are mechanically repaired by outside vendor
- Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) parts must be used during repair
- Aftermarket convertors do not meet the emissions requirements
- OEM parts are usually back ordered and not readily available.

The cost of parts does not reflect:

- Preventative maintenance IE; Oil changes, over milage inspections, etc.
- Cost of labor; Over-time and additional manpower
- Routes not being serviced, loss of product, etc.
- Cost of rental vehicles

Additional costs

- Security and threat assessments
- Enhanced security efforts: Additional fencing, signage, etc.
- Collateral damage to property IE: Damage to fencing, lighting, etc.
- Security guard services, mobile camera services, etc.
- Enhancing the IT platforms, software, etc.



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Catalytic converter disruption

- Supply chain/ distribution
- Operations/ manufacturing
- Fleet/ mechanics
- Sales teams/ routes, grocery stores, supermarkets
- Law enforcement
- Customers/ families