

BUCKHEAD COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOODS
PUBLIC SAFETY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, an essential duty of government is the protection, welfare and security of all its citizens;

WHEREAS, a regular police presence, adequately supported and skillfully deployed throughout our City, is critical to maintaining the security and well-being of all our citizens;

WHEREAS, an important part of crime prevention are simple steps that individuals and businesses can take to protect themselves and their customers from crime.

WHEREAS, equally essential to insuring the welfare and security of our citizens is a fair and effective criminal justice system which safeguards the civil liberties and presumption of innocence of the accused while also recognizing the threat that repeated crimes by the same perpetrators pose to other potential victims and society at large;

WHEREAS, open and efficient communications among all participants in the criminal justice system - police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, elected officials, government administrators and the public – will strengthen the system and provide more transparency;

WHEREAS, proper disposition of criminal cases requires that the officials making decisions have all relevant information regarding the alleged crime and the accused at the time they make those determinations;

WHEREAS, criminals who commit similar crimes over and over, often while they are in pretrial release programs, have become an increasing problem in all parts of our City.

WHEREAS, offenders who repeatedly commit crimes, even if only against property, are a greater threat to society and are more likely to participate in a criminal operation or gang, requiring particular attention to their criminal histories in an effort to deter them from becoming hardened career criminals.

WHEREAS, the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods supports public and private initiatives, programs and facilities that avoid or minimize the need for the incarceration of at-risk youth, the mentally ill and non-violent drug offenders through community wellness programs, drug abuse prevention and treatment and organizations which help those who are in need, who are without support and have nowhere to go;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods supports the following:

1. Councilman JP Matzigkeit's recommendations:
 - Police officers should ensure that their arrest reports contain detailed, complete and timely information;
 - Pretrial services should present judges with comprehensive and accurate criminal histories of the accused;
 - Judges should appropriately consider the threats that repeat offenders pose to the community;
 - District attorneys should be prepared to present their cases;
 - Police officers should be adequately compensated for attendance at judicial proceedings;
 - Probation officers should have manageable caseloads that allow them the ability to prioritize cases based on an offender's danger to the community; and
 - Elected officials should provide the resources and forums to foster successful and efficient operation of the criminal justice system.
2. Judges should review and consider all available information relevant the accused individual, particularly the arresting officer(s) report and any criminal history of the accused, before deciding bond or any other disposition of the case.
3. Atlanta police officers should be adequately and appropriately compensated for their time spent appearing in court to support the prosecution of cases in which they are involved.
4. For protection of themselves and their customers, commercial property owners and retail establishments should develop safety plans consisting of,

but not limited to, security assessments of safety, security guards or off-duty police officers and surveillance cameras.

5. The Fulton County District Attorney should ensure that all information and documentation needed for a proper determination at the accused's first hearing at the Fulton County Jail is available and presented during that hearing.
6. The City should continue to use the Atlanta City Jail, or arrange for some other safe and secure detention facility, for individuals arrested in the City who are to be detained while they await the disposition of their cases.
7. If the Atlanta City Jail continues to be used for detentions, any non-jail services which the City now provides there should be housed in more appropriate locations for such services, like the 72 Marietta building.
8. The Fulton County District Attorney should consider designating and training one or more of his assistant district attorneys to specialize in the prosecution of accused gang members under Georgia's Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Statute.
9. The appropriate authorities should encourage and institute practical and economical means by which our citizens can track the criminal proceedings in our courts, become familiar with the judges who preside over those proceedings and be advised of the determinations made in those proceedings, particularly with regard to crimes which have affected them personally or which have occurred in their neighborhoods. This will provide the citizenry with the means to become fully informed about the challenges facing our criminal courts so they can intelligently evaluate what steps could lead to improved criminal justice in our City.
10. The appropriate authorities should review the laws regarding the retention and disclosure of arrest records of juvenile offenders to determine whether the current provisions relating to the expunging of those records and the limitations on their use in subsequent proceedings are actually enabling additional violations of law by those juvenile offenders. It is critical to proper disposition of juvenile cases that every judge who makes any determination regarding an accused juvenile have before him the juvenile's repeat offender history before making that determination.