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NEWS RELEASE

Date: January 29, 2005
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Director of Communications

NEW FIVE-YEAR MANDATORY MINIMUM LAW TAKES EFFECT TODAY

District Attorney Lynne Abraham, Mothers United Through Tragedy, State and Federal Officials Distribute New Fliers To Get The Word Out: Guns + Drugs = 5 Years State Time

WHEN: SATURDAY JANUARY 29, 2005

TIME: 1:30PM

WHERE: Meet at office of State Rep. LeAnna Washington, 1555-D Wadsworth Ave. (at Pickering), walk south on Wadsworth to Michener

District Attorney Lynne Abraham, Mothers United Through Tragedy, Assistant United States Attorney Robert K. Reed, State Rep. Dwight Evans, State Rep. LeAnna Washington, State Rep. Jewell Williams and Cherelle Parker, special assistant to Councilwoman Marion B. Tasco, will distribute new fliers to get the word out that a new state law takes effect today.

The law, Act 225 of 2004, requires a mandatory five-year sentence for those convicted of drug dealing while in possession of a firearm. It also applies to an accomplice in possession of a gun and applies if guns are found in close proximity to drugs—in a stash house for example. The new law does not apply to one's personal residence.

The new fliers drive home the point: **DRUGS + GUNS = FIVE YEARS IN STATE PRISON**. There is no work release, no pre-release. Additionally, those with three convictions for selling drugs or committing violent crimes with a gun face a 15-year mandatory **FEDERAL** prison sentence.

The old law required a five-year mandatory minimum for those convicted of violent first-degree felonies committed with a gun, but did not include drug dealing. Effective today, the law adds drug dealing to that list of violent crimes.

This new law is a key component of the “Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia,” which was designed to address violent crime in Philadelphia, such as the shooting death of Faheem Thomas- Childs outside the Peirce School. The “Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia” is the product of a partnership among the District Attorney’s Office, the Legislature, the School District, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Governor’s Office, the Philadelphia Police Department and other law enforcement and combines a variety of measures to deal with violent crime. Many of the initiatives have already been implemented. The Juvenile Justice Curriculum teaches all middle school students about juvenile law, Philadelphia Gun Court provides prosecution and prevention and gets guns off the streets, and we have received funding to sustain the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership, the program to save the lives of young people. The enactment of today’s five-year mandatory sentence for gun traffickers who use guns is another strong initiative against violence in Philadelphia.

Those with information about drug dealers are urged to call the District Attorney’s Narcotics Hotline at 215-686-5858. Calls are confidential, and callers do not have to give their names.

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