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NEWS RELEASE

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GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE CHARGES 13 MORE INDIVIDUALS

Gun Violence Task Force Has Opened 621 Investigations, Arrested 179 People and Seized 265 Firearms

June 10, 2008---District Attorney Lynne Abraham, Attorney General Tom Corbett and Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey today announced that the Gun Violence Task Force has arrested/obtained arrest warrants for 13 more individuals charging them with the illegal transfer or use of handguns. Since it began in December 2006, the Task Force has opened 621 investigations involving the illegal transfer of firearms, made 179 arrests, and seized 265 firearms. In addition, the Task Force has assisted Philadelphia police in solving numerous shootings, burglaries, and at least one homicide.

In December 2006, with funding from the State Legislature and spearheaded by State Sen. Vincent Fumo, District Attorney Lynne Abraham and Attorney General Tom Corbett launched the Gun Violence Task Force to attack the proliferation of illegal guns on city streets. Composed of veteran investigators and seasoned prosecutors, and working in close coordination with the Philadelphia Police Department, the Task Force began operations in Southwest Philadelphia and has since expanded into all six of the city's police Divisions.

Under Pennsylvania law, a convicted felon is prohibited from purchasing a firearm. Licensed gun dealers require proof of identity and perform a record check prior to making a sale. Unable to legally purchase firearms from a licensed dealer, felons use false identification or hire "Straws", citizens with no criminal record, to purchase guns for them. The "Straw", after buying the gun and delivering it to the felon, frequently reports the gun as stolen in an attempt to avoid criminal responsibility when the gun is later used in a crime. Felons also illegally purchase weapons "on the street" - most often guns stolen in burglaries.

It was announced today that the following have been arrested:

Jonathan Lopez, 25, of the 6700 block of Akron Street. It is alleged that Lopez, a convicted drug dealer, used a straw to purchase a handgun, which the straw purchaser later falsely reported stolen. Lopez is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6105, Person not to Possess Firearm, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Derrick Harrison, 36, of the 6000 block of North 21st Street. It is alleged that Harrison, prohibited from purchasing a firearm due to his criminal record, falsified purchase forms in an attempt to buy a .40 caliber handgun at a gun show in Philadelphia. Harrison is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree.

John Venturino, 41, of the 300 block of Olive Avenue, Horsham, PA. It is alleged that Venturino, a convicted felon, used a straw purchaser to buy two handguns which Venturino then illegally sold "on the street". One of the handguns, a .40 caliber, was recovered at the scene of a shooting in the 3600 block of Calumet Street. Venturino is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6105, Person not to Possess Firearm, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Duewa Freeman, 26, of the 1600 block of North 33rd Street. It is alleged that Freeman threatened a repo man with a .32 caliber handgun. Freeman is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 2702, Aggravated Assault, a felony of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 2701, Simple Assault, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6106, Firearm not to be Carried without a License, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6108, Carrying a Firearm on a Public Street, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 2705, Recklessly Endangering Another Person, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 2706, Terroristic Threats, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 907, Possession of an Instrument of Crime, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree.

Michael Downing, 27, of the 1900 block of North 10th Street. It is alleged that Downing purchased a .380 caliber handgun which he illegally gave to a convicted drug dealer. The handgun was later recovered by Philadelphia police from a third man, who was arrested after using it to threaten a person in the 5800 block of Malvern Avenue. Downing is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6105, Person not to Possess Firearm, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 3rd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Woodie Marcus, 42, of the 4900 block of Roosevelt Boulevard. It is alleged that Marcus purchased 26 handguns from 1995 through 2003, and that he illegally sold or traded 23 of them for drugs or money. Fourteen of the handguns have been recovered by Philadelphia police, and one was used in a murder. Marcus is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public

Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Francis Cella, 27, of the 2300 block of Susquehanna Avenue. It is alleged that Cella purchased 2 handguns and a shotgun illegally on the street. He later used one of the handguns in a drive-by shooting in the 3400 block of Tulip Street for which he was separately charged. Cella is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6106, Firearm not to be Carried Without A License, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6108, Carrying a Firearm on a Public Street, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Macangelo Tillman, 35, of the 7500 block of Brockton Road. It is alleged that Tillman purchased 32 handguns, one of which was reported stolen, and one of which was legally sold. Seven others have been recovered by Philadelphia police: one from a juvenile charged with narcotics violations; two from Tillman; one from a 20 year old charged with narcotics violations; one from an individual charged with an assault on police; one during the course of a homicide investigation and matched to a series of armed robberies; and one from a large marijuana arrest. Tillman is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6105, Person not to Possess Firearm, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree.

Andre Christy, 28, of the 1200 block of South 51st Street. It is alleged that Christy was paid to straw purchase three handguns. One of the handguns was recovered by Philadelphia police following a shooting in the 2500 block of W. Seltzer Street. Another handgun, which had been falsely reported stolen by Christy, was also recovered by police. Christy is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4906, False Reports to Law Enforcement, a misdemeanor of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree.

Bobby McGill, 24, of the 1200 block of South 49th Street. It is alleged that McGill illegally sold a .40 caliber handgun on the street and then falsely reported it stolen. McGill is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 3rd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 4906, False Reports to Law Enforcement, a misdemeanor of the 3rd degree.

R.M., a juvenile, of Northeast Philadelphia. It is alleged that R.M. stole a .40 caliber handgun from the home of a neighbor and illegally sold it on the street. The handgun was confiscated a few days later by Philadelphia police along with two sawed off shotguns and masks when they arrested Andre Lozada and two other men for a home invasion robbery in the 7900 block of Loretto avenue. R.M. is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 3921, Theft by Unlawful Taking, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 3925, Theft by Receiving Stolen Property, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6106, Firearm not to be Carried Without A License, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6108, Carrying a Firearm on a Public Street, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6110-1, Possession of a Firearm by a Minor, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

In addition to the above arrests, warrants have been issued for:

Jamie Bennett, 22, of the 7900 block of Ditman Street. It is alleged that Bennett stole 3 handguns from a relative and illegally sold them on the street. Bennett is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 3921, Theft by Unlawful Taking, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 3925, Theft by Receiving Stolen Property, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6106, Firearm not to be Carried Without A License, a felony of the 3rd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6108, Carrying a Firearm on a Public Street, a misdemeanor of the 1st degree; 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Latrice Hutt, 25, of the 1400 block of Pacific Street. It is alleged that Hutt straw purchased two handguns for her children's father, who has been arrested more than 20 times. One of the handguns was later recovered by Philadelphia police during a Homicide arrest. Hutt is charged with violating 18 PA.C.S. 6111, Illegal Transfer of Firearms, a felony of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4904, Unsworn Falsification, a misdemeanor of the 2nd degree; 18 PA.C.S. 4911, Tampering with Public Records or Information, a felony of the 3rd degree; and 18 PA.C.S. 903, Conspiracy, a felony of the 2nd degree.

Felonies of the 2nd degree are punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$25,000 fine. Felonies of the 3rd degree are punishable by up to 7 years imprisonment and a \$15,000 fine. Misdemeanors of the 1st degree are punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. Conviction of more than one count of 18 PA.C.S.A 6111 is a felony of the 2nd degree and carries a **mandatory** sentence of five to 10 years imprisonment and a \$25,000 fine.