

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Office of the Attorney General**



**ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**KARL A. RACINE**



November 2019

Dear Principal/Teacher/Youth Leader:

As you know, the District is in the grips of a violence epidemic. With lives at risk, we need a comprehensive, “all-hands on deck” response from leaders across the District—and that includes the young people who see the impacts of this crisis up close.

That’s the idea behind the **“Do the Write Thing Challenge,”** a national essay contest that gives middle school students the chance to speak out about how violence affects their lives, and share their ideas about what we all must do to stop it. For the fourth year in a row, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is sponsoring this contest. I am asking for your help to join with OAG and encourage our young people to empower themselves through writing.

Our city is filled with inspiring young people, and all too many of them have witnessed the violence firsthand. We want to give them a chance to make themselves heard. By elevating their thinking around how to end gun violence and create a safe city that supports their hopes and dreams, we can offer them new pathways to begin the healing process. In turn, when a student writes about how they are afraid to go to sleep because they hear gunshots that make them stay up all night, their words obligate us to stop, listen, and act.

The **“Do the Write Thing” Challenge** asks our youth to articulate how violence affects them. Teachers, educators, and volunteers like you are immensely important in encouraging students to participate. Enclosed are more details about the program, along with information on how you can support your students through the application process. Final submissions are due on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by 11:59 p.m. All essayists—along with their principals, teachers, and family—will be invited to a recognition celebration at OAG in April 2020.

Please join us by accepting the challenge to participate this year, and help us break the cycles of trauma holding our young people back from achieving their full potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "KARL A. RACINE".

Karl A. Racine  
Attorney General for the District of Columbia