



SAO UPDATE

WINTER 2026

The Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office • State's Attorney, Ivan J. Bates

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43 KILOS SEIZED IN TAKEDOWN

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FROM THE DESK OF IVAN J. BATES



Dear Baltimoreans,

As we reflect on 2025 and look ahead, I want to thank the dedicated women and men of the State's Attorney's Office for another year of meaningful public safety work. Baltimore ended the year with a 31% decrease in homicides, a 24% drop in non-fatal shootings, a 37% reduction in carjackings, and a 16% decline in robberies.

When I took office, I committed to rebuilding the State's Attorney's

Office and focusing on violent repeat offenders and illegal firearms. While every loss of life is one too many, these results show real progress—alongside the reality that there is still more work to do.

Since then, our office has grown from 140 to 200 prosecutors, attracting experienced former city prosecutors and seasoned attorneys, as well as critical support staff. We have also made a substantial investment in training across the agency, strengthening case preparation and improving outcomes in Baltimore City courtrooms.

The results speak for themselves. Over three years, we secured 382 homicide convictions and approximately 1300 felony convictions carrying mandatory minimums, most involving firearms. Extraditions nearly tripled to 156 in 2025, and our Citation Docket Program has generated almost 1,000 hours of community service from low-level offenders.

None of this would be possible without our strong partnerships with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Baltimore Police Department.

I look forward to continuing this work in 2026 and beyond and thank the community for partnering with us to build a safer Baltimore for all.

With Gratitude,

Ivan J. Bates
State's Attorney

SAO Gears Up For The 2026 Legislative Session



State's Attorney Bates and members of our Legislative Affairs Team are preparing to go to Annapolis and testify for legislation that will improve public safety and uphold justice in Baltimore's communities.

Here is a preview of just some of the bills we will be advocating for:

Criminal Procedure – District Court Commissioners and False Statements

Prohibiting a District Court commissioner from issuing an arrest warrant to an individual other than a police officer or an Assistant State's Attorney; increasing the penalty for making a false statement or report to a governmental official or unit from six months to up to three years of imprisonment; and retaining the maximum \$500 fine.

Criminal Law - Child's Access to Firearms - Penalty (Ny'Kala Strawder Act)

Increasing the penalty to up to five years of imprisonment, and/or a fine, for storing or leaving a loaded firearm in a location where the person knew - or should have known - that an unsupervised minor has access to the firearm.

Criminal Law – Conspiracy Drug Trafficking – Venue

This bill would expand the ability of the State's Attorney's Office to charge certain offenses that occurred across jurisdictions with the consent of the respective State's Attorneys.



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DEFENDANT INDICTED FOR DEATHS OF THREE FIREFIGHTERS IN STRICKER STREET FIRE



State's Attorney Ivan J. Bates and prosecutors were joined by representatives from the Mayor's Office, Baltimore City, Fire Department, Baltimore Police Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Baltimore Firefighters IAFF Local #734, and Baltimore Fire Officers IAFF Local #964 in November to announce charges for defendant James Barnett for three counts of Second-Degree Depraved Heart Murder, three counts of Involuntary Manslaughter, and one count of Second-Degree Arson related to the fatal Stricker Street fire that occurred on January 24, 2022.

"The tragic loss of Firefighter Lacayo and Lieutenants Sadler and Butrim weighs heavily on our entire city, leaving an immense void, especially within the close-knit Baltimore Fire family. These charges are a direct result of years of diligent work, thorough investigations, testing, and retesting to ensure our office was well-positioned to move forward," said **State's Attorney Bates**. "Through dedicated teamwork with our partners at the Baltimore City Fire Department, Baltimore Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, we are now poised to embark on a meaningful journey toward justice for these three courageous heroes, who dedicated their lives to protecting our community and were taken too soon in the line of duty."

On January 24, 2022, Baltimore City emergency services received a 9-1-1 call for a fire at 205 Stricker Street at 5:51 a.m. Additional callers reported the same fire, indicating that there were children trapped inside the dwelling. Numerous engines of the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) arrived at the location at 5:55 a.m. to attempt to extinguish the flames. Engine 14 arrived first on scene and made entry in the ground level at approximately 5:57 a.m. Several BCFD members entered the building, including Firefighter John McMaster, Firefighter Kenneth Lacayo, Firefighter Kelsey Sadler, and Firefighter Paul Butrim. At approximately 6:00 a.m., the second and third floors of the structure collapsed, trapping multiple BCFD members. Rescue efforts began, and at approximately 6:14 a.m. Firefighter McMaster was removed from the debris, transported for medical intervention, and survived. Firefighters Lacayo, Sadler, and Butrim were not able to be removed until well after an hour following the collapse. All three succumbed to their injuries as a result.

BPD, DEA, and State's Attorney's Office Secure 19 Indictments Related to Drug Trafficking in West Baltimore



In December, State's Attorney Bates announced the takedown of three Drug Trafficking Organizations operating in the West Baltimore area. "The concentration of Drug Trafficking Organizations in the Penn North Area is not only unacceptable from a quality of life standpoint, but it is also extremely dangerous, as evidenced by the ongoing violence and overdoses in that neighborhood," said **State's Attorney Bates**. "I am incredibly appreciative of my Major Investigations Unit for their strategic coordination with the Baltimore Police Department's Group Violence Unit and the Drug Enforcement Administration. It is through this partnership that we have been able to dismantle three criminal organizations so quickly and begin the crucial process of delivering justice and accountability."

Beginning in January 2025, the Baltimore Police Department Group Violence Unit (GVU) initiated an investigation into a Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) operating in and around the area of the 700 block of Cumberland Street and the 1700 block of N. Carey Street. The DTO sold both heroin/fentanyl, which they advertised by the name "550", and cocaine. As the investigation progressed, GVU detectives identified numerous individuals as members of the DTO, including, but not limited to, Dominic Lambert, Kevin Fowlkes, Clifton Bryant, Shawn Williams, Eric Morris, Antonio Thornton, and one juvenile. The investigation into the "550" DTO culminated in the issuance of arrest warrants for these seven individuals and the execution of search-and-seizure warrants on November 12, 2025.

While investigating the "550" DTO, Baltimore Police Department Group Violence Unit detectives identified a second DTO operating in close proximity, primarily in and around the 1700 block of N. Calhoun Street. This DTO sold both fentanyl, which they advertised by the name "Six-Nine", and cocaine. Detectives identified Genard Hope, Damon Grady, Eric Briggs, Deonta Carter, Travis Smith, Dejuane Hicks, and Jamie Hawkins as members of what they believed to be an ongoing narcotics trafficking conspiracy. The investigation into the "Six-Nine" DTO resulted in the issuance of arrest warrants for these seven individuals and to the execution of search-and-seizure warrants on August 1, 2025.

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Since July 2025, GUV detectives, with the assistance of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) - Washington Division, have also been investigating a DTO operating in and around the 2100 block of Brunt Street in the Western District of Baltimore City.

The investigation into the DTO began after a mass opioid overdose event that occurred at the intersection of W. North Ave. and Pennsylvania Ave. on July 10, 2025. A total of 27 victims were located and treated for opioid overdoses in the immediate vicinity. GUV detectives began to review security footage, monitored CCTV, and reviewed Body Worn Camera footage, which led to the development of several people of interest who may be responsible for distributing the toxic narcotics. Following the overdose event on July 10, 2025, the significant police presence in the area caused the various DTOs to leave the area of W. North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue and establish sales in the surrounding blocks. One such DTO involved Shawn Oliver, Kevin Malone, Donte Drummond, Camron Harrison, and a juvenile. This DTO established a drug shop in the area of the 2100 block of Brunt Street, where over the course of the following five months, BPD detectives and DEA agents investigated their activity and learned that they sold large quantities of fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine.

DRUG TRAFFICKING PIPELINE BETWEEN TEXAS AND MARYLAND DISMANTLED, 43 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE SEIZED STREET FIRE



In November, State's Attorney Bates was joined by Baltimore County State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger, Baltimore City Sheriff Sam Cogen, Christopher C. Goumenis, Special Agent in Charge of DEA Washington Division, Baltimore Police Commissioner Richard Worley, Baltimore County Police Chief Robert O. McCullough, and Jeff Beeson, Executive Director of Washington/Baltimore HIDTA

to announce the takedown of a Drug Trafficking Organization operating between Texas and Maryland to import and distribute cocaine.

"Drug Trafficking Organizations like this one wreak havoc on our communities by fostering an environment filled with danger and anxiety, ultimately degrading the quality of life for our residents. These organizations lead to increased crime rates, addiction issues, and a decline in overall living conditions for those in affected neighborhoods," said **State's Attorney Bates**.

Beginning in January 2025, detectives with the Baltimore County Police Department's Narcotics Unit commenced an investigation into a group of individuals that they believed were importing large amounts of cocaine from Texas into Maryland.

As the investigation progressed, they identified several members of what they believed to be an ongoing narcotics trafficking conspiracy, including Benjamin Rivas Lopez, Santos Ayala Serrano, Brayan Juarez Cruz, Pablo Abelardo Molina, Fredy Lopez Chinchilla, Gerson Tabora Chinchilla, Hamilton Cha Pacay, German Aguilar Mencias, and Elvin Ayala Paz.

Detectives also found that the organization was using multiple residences as narcotic stash locations, including an apartment in southeast Baltimore City and another home in Baltimore County.

Through several investigative techniques, detectives developed a pattern for the organization that led them to believe a new shipment of narcotics was going to arrive at the identified stash location in Baltimore City around October 2, 2025.

They obtained search-and-seizure warrants for the stash locations, as well as multiple vehicles that they believed were being used by members of the organization to facilitate their narcotics trafficking. Detectives then immediately executed the search-and-seizure warrant at the location and recovered a total of approximately 43 kilograms of cocaine and a bolt-action .22 caliber rifle. This volume of cocaine has an approximate street value of \$4 million.





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COLD CASE UNIT SECURES LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR REPEAT MURDERER



Defendant Reginald Lively was sentenced to Life without the possibility of parole for the fatal bludgeoning and stabbing of 68-year-old John Hall III in Northwest Baltimore City. This is the defendant's third homicide conviction. He previously pled guilty in 1986 in Anne Arundel County to the Second-Degree Murder of Ms. Eleanor Williams and served eight years of a 20-year sentence. He was released and later pled guilty to the Second-Degree Murder of Ms. Willy Mae Arrington in North Carolina in 2000. He was sentenced to 30 years in that case and served approximately 12 years before being paroled again. Cold Case Unit Chief Kurt Bjorklund prosecuted this case.

"This violent offender should never have been allowed to walk free," said **State's Attorney Bates**. "Because of Chief Bjorklund's relentless advocacy for Mr. Hall's family, those days are over. No longer will repeat violent offenders serve a few years only to be released and terrorize our communities again. My office will continue to fight to ensure they face the full weight of justice."

For four years, the murder of Mr. Hall had gone without justice or accountability. Under Cold Case Unit Chief Kurt Bjorklund, further investigation was conducted to ensure that the defendant would be found guilty by a jury of First-Degree Murder and Deadly Weapon.

"Clearly, this investigation needed 'fresh eyes,'" **Chief Kurt Bjorklund stated**. "Without question, the file contained significant evidence against the defendant dating from 2021, but there were more avenues to pursue, including additional DNA testing. Credit is due to the Baltimore Police Department for its continuing investigation and collaboration with SAO's Cold Case Unit."

BALTIMORE POLICE OFFICER ROBERT A. PARKS INDICTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER AND RELATED CHARGES



Following the viral video of Officer Robert Parks appearing to try to run an individual over with his police vehicle, State's Attorney Bates launched an investigation and ultimately indicted the officer on charges of Second-Degree Attempted Murder, First-Degree Assault, Second-Degree Assault, Reckless Driving, and Misconduct in Office. If found guilty of all charges, Officer Parks faces a maximum sentence of 65 years of incarceration. There is no maximum penalty for Misconduct. An indictment is not a finding of guilt.

"The charges brought forward in this indictment reflect the serious and dangerous nature of the actions we all witnessed in the video of Officer Parks. These are the same charges we would bring forward for anyone operating a vehicle in this manner," said **State's Attorney Bates**. "When a police officer threatens the safety of those they are sworn to protect, it erodes the crucial trust between the community and law enforcement that is critical to the historic reductions in violent crime in our city and essential to keeping Baltimore safe."





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Our External Affairs team spoke with students at Leith Walk Elementary/Middle School about public service during Career Day.



State's Attorney Bates welcomed a delegation of prosecutors from Romania and Moldova to discuss best practices and share the work of the State's Attorney's Office.



The State's Attorney's Office raised \$6,000 to support lifesaving research and awareness efforts at the Making Strides of Baltimore Breast Cancer Walk.



State's Attorney Bates presented citations to graduates of the Baltimore City District Court Re-Entry Project (DCREP). Baltimore City District Court Judge Nicole Pastore founded DCREP in 2016 as a court-focused criminal recidivism initiative that offers defendants an opportunity to participate in full-time job training and job placement programs as a condition of their probation or in lieu of incarceration.

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ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY:

The mission of the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City is to create true public safety through partnerships with elected officials, law enforcement, and our residents. The Office fulfills this goal through the successful prosecution of all crimes in Baltimore City.



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