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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 27, 2005

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**NJ Attorney General, PSE&G, East Orange School District and  
Violence Prevention Institute Host Youth Summit on Violence  
Harvey Talks with Students about how Images in Music and  
Clothing Have Shaped their Attitudes toward Violence  
-PSE&G Donates \$25,000 to Support Violence Prevention-**

(EAST ORANGE) New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey talked candidly with middle school students in East Orange Wednesday about how images popularized in music, videos and on clothing have helped to glorify violence. Students heard explicit testimony and saw graphic photos illustrating the reality of gun violence. They discussed whether these images were helping to change the way they think about engaging in dangerous behavior. The resounding answer was “yes”.

The summit was the third in a series presented by the Violence Prevention Institute, a nonprofit organization working to educate young people about the consequences of violence. A \$25,000 contribution from PSE&G, the Institute’s first corporate partner, is helping the program succeed in getting kids to understand how important making the right choice can be.

“We want students to understand that we all make choices every minute of every day,” says Dr. Duane Dyson, the founder of the Violence Prevention Institute. “Every choice has a consequence, and the quality of the rest of our lives depends on those choices.”

The statistics as they relate to juvenile crime are compelling. Of the more than 6,000 arrests reported in New Jersey for weapons offenses in 2003, 34 percent were juveniles. 21 percent of murder victims were between the ages of 20 and 24, and juveniles accounted for 12 percent of drug violation arrests in 2003. (According to the 2003 Uniform Crime Report)

“Violence, particularly among youth, is one of the two most important issues facing communities in New Jersey and across this nation,” said New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey. “The Violence Prevention Institute, along with other gang prevention initiatives, like Project Vision-New Jersey, are key programs for reaching young people and parents to deglamourize thug life and reinforce education, respect and other life-affirming values. We cannot arrest, prosecute and incarcerate every troubled youth.”

PSE&G has long supported NJ’s children and families, and programs that strengthen the communities it serves. “This is a powerful program that is making a dramatic impact on our state’s youth,” said Fred DeSanti, PSE&G vice president-external affairs. “As one of the largest companies in the state, PSE&G contributes significantly to organizations dedicated to making New Jersey a better place to live and work and raise families. We are proud to support Dr. Dyson’s efforts and to reaffirm our commitment to charitable giving.”

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The East Orange Board of Education, through the Safe Schools Committee, took the lead in asking the Violence Prevention Institute to present this program to the District's 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Board recognized that prevention would likely resolve some of the issues that are faced by its students all too frequently.

Currently, thousands of students in both East Orange and West Orange are participating in the Institute's program, exploring the myths and realities of gun violence. Wednesday's conversation supplemented research being done as part of a larger study on violence prevention.

*The Violence Prevention Institute (VPI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to impressing upon NJ students a realistic view of gun injuries and the resulting consequences. Working cooperatively with municipal officials, Boards of Education, police departments, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, the New Jersey State Juvenile Justice Commission, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, and corporate partners like PSE&G, VPI is working to build safe and healthy communities, free from violence.*

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