

# Letters: Gun violence and Poverty

By [Star-Ledger Editorial Board](#)

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## Poverty and violence

Regarding The Star-Ledger's Jan. 1 article by James Queally ("**Disregard for life' threatens a generation**"): It's not about fewer guns and more police; it's about reducing poverty.

Poverty is the basis of all Newark's ills. If poverty is not reduced, Newark will never improve.

As Newark residents, we've witnessed the city's poverty increase from an appalling 25 percent in 2007 to almost 32 percent. Consequently, since 2007, Newark's murder rate has risen from eighth in nation to seventh. Reducing poverty will reduce crime.

The Star-Ledger must educate readers not only to the ills of poverty, but also that we must demand city leaders formulate a poverty-reduction plan by creating a massive number of public works jobs. The No. 1 recommendation to improve inner cities, in President Lyndon Johnson's 1968 Civil Disorders Report, was jobs.

If we're spending trillions on wars, purportedly about terrorism, money should be available to fight the terrorism at home, on the streets of Newark. We must also require that our police and all city employees live in Newark, so that they too have "skin in the game."

*Jerome and Marylou Bongiorno, Newark, producers of a Newark documentary trilogy: "Revolution '67," "The Rule" and "Rust"*

**NOTE: Since The Ledger reserves the right to edit submissions, READ UNEDITED VERSION:**

Regarding Queally's 1.1.14 article: It's not about less guns and more police, it's about REDUCING POVERTY. Poverty is the basis of all Newark's ills. If poverty is not reduced, Newark will never improve.

As Newark residents, we've witnessed Newark's poverty increase from an appalling 25% in 2007 to almost 32%! Consequently, since 2007, Newark's murder rate has risen from 8th in nation to 7th. Reducing the poverty will reduce the crime.

SL must educate its readers not only to the "ills of poverty" but that we must demand our city leaders immediately formulate a poverty reduction plan that creates a massive amount of WPA-style jobs. The #1 recommendation to improve inner cities, in President Johnson's 1968 Civil Disorders Report, is JOBS:

[http://www.bongiornoproductions.com/REVOLUTION\\_67/Civil\\_Disorder\\_Reports.html](http://www.bongiornoproductions.com/REVOLUTION_67/Civil_Disorder_Reports.html).

Further, our city leaders musn't cry about a lack of money for WPA-style jobs since, if we're spending trillions on wars, purportedly about terrorism, money should be available to fight the terrorism going on at home on the streets of Newark.

Regarding Police Director DeMaio's quote: "...how do you stop that murder?" We must also require that our police and all city employees live in Newark so that they too have "skin in the game."

Sincerely,

Jerome & Marylou Bongiorno, filmmakers of Newark documentary trilogy:  
*Revolution '67, The Rule, Rust*