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City Attorney Zach Klein Issues Statement as Juveniles Charged with Murder in Death of Ohio Mother Killed Following Vehicle Heist

Klein says system of little accountability has failed a small group of juveniles who continue to commit crimes, cause havoc and threaten public safety

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today issued a statement on reports of three individuals – two juveniles and one 19 year-old – surrendering to Columbus Police in connection with the hit and run death of Alexa Stakely who was struck and killed after the three individuals carjacked Stakely’s vehicle with her child inside, struck her, and then fled on foot earlier this month.

“I am grateful that these individuals did the right thing and surrendered to police. But justice cannot end with these individuals or even this case. This tragedy must serve as a wakeup call to fix what’s broken in our juvenile justice system.

“We have teens in our community who have stolen multiple cars or broken into vehicles looking for guns which end up being used to commit acts of violence. We’ve heard the cries of moms and dads pleading for help to get their kids off the street and back on the right path, but right now, these kids know they can do whatever they want with little consequence or meaningful accountability.

“This lawlessness has costs—for those whose lives are impacted by these senseless crimes, for families of these kids who wonder if tonight will be the night their child doesn’t make it home alive, and even for business owners who suffer when people are scared to go out.

“The focus must be real accountability and doubling-down on prevention. We must support our police to get repeat offenders and violent individuals off the street and encourage the judiciary to recognize that things must change. Equal to that, we need to invest in opportunity for youth and families so that they do not consider a life of crime in the first place. We need prosecutors, judges, elected leaders, parents, educators and mentors to all do their part.

“We cannot wait for another tragedy or family to be torn apart to make the necessary changes we know are needed to make Columbus the world-class city it truly is. The time for meaningful action to impact these kids and protect public safety is now.”