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COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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## City Attorney Zach Klein Reflects on 2022, Highlights Work to Improve Public Safety and Advocate for Columbus Residents

*Says Columbus residents are seeing a difference in their neighborhoods,  
commits to continuing progress in 2023*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—With 2022 coming to a close, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today offered his reflections on the past year, highlighting the work of the City Attorney’s Office to advance [priorities laid out at the beginning of the year](#), including focusing on crime in Columbus neighborhoods, shuttering violent and drug-ridden properties, improving public safety, and advocating for consumers, residents and the civil rights of all who live and work in the city.

In 2022, the City Attorney’s Office worked alongside the Division of Police and Code Enforcement to shutter more than a dozen drug houses and take legal action against several bars, hotels and area businesses plagued by violence, drugs and other criminal activity, including a [south side scrapyard that was accepting stolen vehicles and parts](#) in exchange for cash. The City also took legal action against the owners of several east side properties, including [Eastland Mall](#) and the site of [the former Fort Rapids Indoor Waterpark Resort](#) for failing to fix dangerous code violations that threaten public safety.

This year, the City Attorney’s Office also secured major wins benefiting tenants at several apartment complexes known for unsafe, unsanitary living conditions, including Colonial Village, where [a receivership group took control of the property](#) after years of derelict ownership to fix up units and prepare the complex for sale. At Latitude Five25, City officials took aggressive action to hold property owners responsible for poor living conditions, [pushing for the sale](#) of the complex or face a takeover similar to Colonial Village. In recent days, after system failures led to the evacuation of the complex, the City moved to hold owners in contempt of court and send the property into receivership. In addition, at the [Ardmore Village](#), [Southpark](#), and Wedgewood Apartments, the City continued to push property owners to improve security and bring units back into compliance with health and safety codes. City Attorney Klein says pressuring landlords to do right by their tenants will continue to be a top priority in 2023.

**“Columbus residents are seeing a real difference in their neighborhoods as we disrupt the flow of drugs into our streets, take on criminal activity at local businesses, and hold landlords accountable if they fail to provide safe, sanitary housing for their residents,”** said City Attorney Zach Klein. **“Safe neighborhoods begin with**

**good neighbors, and we've made it a priority to go after those who threaten the peace and safety of the places folks call home."**

Additionally in 2022, the City Attorney's Office handled over 10,000 criminal prosecutions, including for hundreds of domestic violence, impaired driving and violent offenses, where city prosecutors pushed for tough penalties to hold these offenders accountable. While City Attorney Klein remained tough on violent crime and threats to public safety this year, the City Attorney's Office also continued to expand its innovative diversion program, which connects certain nonviolent offenders with opportunities for diversion and rehabilitation rather than prosecution—giving people a second chance to get the help they need to live better, more productive lives.

Also this year, City Attorney Klein teamed up with the Columbus Division of Police to roll out [Operation Wheels Down](#), a joint effort to step up enforcement and prosecution of individuals who illegally ride vehicles like dirt bikes and ATVs on city streets. City prosecutors cracked down on dozens of offenders, prosecuting cases to the fullest extent of the law, which got these dangerous riders off the roads and made city streets safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

**"As City Attorney, I have prioritized prosecuting violent crime, cases of domestic violence, repeat offenders and those who have no regard for human life,"** City Attorney Klein said. **"This year, we've redoubled our efforts to deliver justice for victims and get dangerous individuals off the streets all while ensuring we're able to identify and help certain lower level, non-violent offenders get back on their feet to support themselves or their families—a strategy that's working to lower crime and improve lives."**

In addition, under City Attorney Klein's leadership in 2022, Columbus has continued to lend a strong voice on key issues at the local, state and national level, including:

- [Prevailing on a preliminary challenge](#) to the state's prohibition on cities from enacting local gun safety ordinances, allowing Columbus City Council to take action on several commonsense measures to reduce gun violence and keep firearms out of the hands of minors and dangerous individuals. Additionally, City Attorney Klein announced his office would assist the U.S. Attorney's Office with additional resources to prosecute dangerous individuals for gun-related crimes—helping to keep our streets safe.
- When the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, City Attorney Klein was [among the first prosecutors in the country](#) to announce that Columbus will not prioritize prosecution of those who seek, assist in, or provide abortion care.
- When it was uncovered that [thefts of Kia and Hyundai cars](#) began to skyrocket due to substandard anti-theft systems, City Attorney Klein announced his office intended to pursue legal action against the corporate automakers if they were unwilling to do right by car owners and offer a fix.

**"As one of the largest cities in the country, Columbus residents want us to have a seat at the table, whether that's having a voice on the national stage or asserting our right to make policy decisions right here at home,"** said City Attorney Klein. **"This year, we made our voices heard, acted to protect consumers and protect our rights, safety and freedom. We will continue to lend our voice on the issues that matter most to residents as we head into 2023."**

The City Attorney's Office in 2022 also continued to build on several programs benefiting Columbus residents, like Blueprint for Safety, a multi-faceted approach to protect victims of domestic violence, which this year announced the launch of a pilot program to provide wraparound advocate services to domestic violence victims.

Additionally, the City continued to grow Project Taillight, a program that funds repairs for safety equipment on vehicles of low-income residents rather than issuing citations, which started with one repair location at Columbus State in 2021, and now includes a number of repair shops across the city, better connecting lower income residents with the tools they need to save money and safely get back on the road.

**“I’m proud of the work the City Attorney’s Office has done this year to deliver on our priorities while remaining responsive to the needs of those we represent. As we head into 2023, we will continue to put safety first, and work together to take on the challenges before us. We have more work to do,”** added City Attorney Klein.

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