



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## Statewide Listening Tour Launches Operation S.n.u.g. Anti-crime Initiative In Buffalo

MALCOLM A. SMITH July 8, 2008

*State Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith Teams Up with Upstate Community and Police in Public Awareness Campaign to ‘Stop the Violence’*

(Buffalo-NY)-State Senator Antoine M. Thompson hosted a roundtable Operation S.N.U.G. forum in Buffalo as part of a statewide campaign to combat random gun violence that has plagued parts of the state during the hot summer months.

State Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans) and State Senator William Stachowski (D-Buffalo) along with other invited members of the West New York Delegation also attended the forum and participate in parts of the statewide listening tour. Powerful Harlem Democratic Rep. Charles Rangel (D-Harlem) attended an early S.N.U.G., forum in Harlem, where participants agreed to seek federal aid, as well as, enlist celebrities, corporations and community leaders in a public awareness campaign against crime, focusing on random gun violence.

“This is a very important initiative that the Senate minority has taken on, we have to stop talking about the gun violence and start to do something to make the quality of life for all residents better, said Senator Thompson, a Democrat representing parts of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Erie County. “This has to be a campaign where we bring all of the stakeholders to the table not to talk, but to take action.”

Since the summer began there has been a rash of random shootings throughout the state, including Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Harlem and Queens.

Local community groups have urged elected officials to address the growing number of shootings in some neighborhoods and to increase efforts to ensure the safety of residents, especially in the public housing developments.

Operation S.N.U.G., guns spelled backwards, is design to bring greater community awareness to the random gun violence resulting in people being wounded and killed.

The public forums are intended to draw attention to the problem and propose solutions that include opening community centers and creating other programs to give young people constructive activities during long summer days.

“We all must do our part to keep our children, families, and communities safe from crime,” said Senator Smith.

Senator Stachowski said: “We are committed to eradicating all crime, especially random shootings throughout the state. We are all working together to create an environment that will help reduce the level of violence and improve the quality of life in Buffalo neighborhoods, making them a safer place to live, work, and thrive.”

This new initiative consists of:

**S**treet intervention and stopping the violence, including

§ Violence interrupters

§ Support for local police and law enforcement

**N**ational state local funding support

- funding for all alternatives
- legislation that can help implement solutions

**U**se of celebrities and centers

- improving public relations and materials
- Utilizing existing community centers, new bunkers and community offices to provide youths with a place to go.

**G**angs, guns, gainful employment

- Real-world gang awareness and prevention initiatives

- Bring potential employers and the business community together to help find jobs and mentor youths.

Smith said that many neighborhood youths may not have a recreational center or place to go, which possibly contributes to the increase in violence in some neighborhoods during the long summer days.

“It is time we take back what is rightfully ours, the community,” Smith concluded.