



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## Senate President Malcolm A. Smith Joined By Senators Addabbo, Huntley, Onorato, Stavisky, Launch Operation SNUG To Stop Gun Violence And Save Lives

MALCOLM A. SMITH October 7, 2009

| ISSUE: **GUN CONTROL**



*Awards \$500,000 to community organization in Queens, NY to end deadly cycle of gun violence*

(New York, NY) – In an effort to cut down on illegal guns and gang violence that plagues urban communities across the State of New York, Senate President Malcolm A. Smith joined by Senators Addabbo, Huntley, Onorato and Stavisky announced the first phase of funding

for Operation SNUG. The \$4 million statewide initiative, is designed to support local law enforcement and anti-violence community groups who steer at-risk New Yorkers away from the culture of gangs and illegal guns.

As part of the FY2009-10 State Budget, the Senate secured funding for SNUG to develop front-line anti-gun and gang violence prevention efforts that will benefit the hardest-hit communities across the state. The \$4 million will be evenly distributed throughout New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and Westchester County. On Thursday, Senator Smith awarded the first \$500,000 of SNUG funding to King of Kings Foundation, a non-profit organization which works to combat gang activity in Queens County and provide information regarding gang activity and awareness.

“Today marks a turning point in community safety,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Malcolm A. Smith. “Gun violence affects us all- white or black, rich or poor, illegal guns terrorize neighborhoods and tear apart families. For too long, the deadly specter of illegal guns has gone unchecked. Our children are dying at the hands of gun violence, but through our commitment to SNUG, we can put a stop to that deadly trend now and return our streets to their rightful owners, the people of New York.”

The funding is being awarded in honor of Kevin Miller, a 13 year old resident of St. Albans who was murdered last week by a stray bullet from a gun fight that occurred near the corner of Nashville and Linden Blvd. Miller, who was standing nearby was struck in the head by an errant bullet and later pronounced dead at Long Island Jewish Hospital. 19-year-old Pedro Garcia, an employee of the carwash on Springfield Boulevard and Linden Boulevard who was working at the time of the incident was also shot, and suffered non-life threatening injuries. Neither victim was involved with the dispute.

Senator Shirley L. Huntley said: “ It is our duty as elected officials to try and make our communities as safe as possible for our constituents. I think that Operation SNUG is a great start to curbing violence. We cannot afford to lose another young person in our community.”

As part of the statewide SNUG program, regions decimated by gun and gang violence will receive new infusions of much-needed funding that will allow for better cooperation between police and prosecutors to keep our children safe and streets secure. The money is being allocated as part of a statewide Request for Proposal process.

Senator Smith added, “30,000 people will likely die this year as a result of gun violence, and many of them will be young people. Operation SNUG is vital to a new age of community safety in the 21st Century . It will provide the support that our local anti-violence programs need and will help us save lives.”

Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr. said: “ We are losing to many of our young people to senseless violence. We must take back our streets and keep our communities safe at all cost.”

Through outreach, prevention and intervention techniques, Operation SNUG will pay specific attention to ways in which we can keep young New Yorkers aged 14 to 25 out of gang life and away from illegal guns.

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said: “ We must get illegal guns off of our streets and keep our children safe.”

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall said: “Guns and violence are a deadly mix that result in tragic loss of lives. Even if only one more gun is taken off the street by initiatives like Operation SNUG, we may save a life. I am delighted that Senator Smith will provide this funding in honor of Kevin Miller, whose death by gunfire has touched our entire city.”

Every urban community in New York has fallen victim to the tale of children and guns. For instance, though Rochester has the third highest population in the state, in 2005 that city had the highest murder rate, with 8 of the 54 victims of gun violence aged 17 or younger.

Operation SNUG was born out of child gun violence in Senator Smith's community last summer when, within a three-day span in May of 2008, the Far Rockaway Peninsula became a violent battleground with five men shot and two teenagers killed.

Following these shootings, an initial "summit" of elected officials was held, led by Senators Smith, Eric Adams, Bill Perkins, Congressman Charles Rangel, Assemblyman Darryl Towns, and Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes. Operation SNUG stands for:

**S:** Street intervention and stopping the violence

- violence interrupters and outreach to high-risk youth
- support for and coordination with police and law enforcement
- clearly communicating community values against shootings and violence
- engaging schools and educators as part of the solution

**N:** National, state and local funding support

- funding for all alternatives
- legislation to help implement solutions
- public and private support for intervention and prevention as part of the response

**U:** Use of celebrities and centers

- development of a comprehensive public relations effort, including celebrity PSAs and materials
- reopening and revitalization of existing community centers, creation of new bunkers and

community “safe haven” storefronts for youth

**G: Gangs, guns, gainful employment**

- real-world gang awareness and prevention initiatives
- new efforts to stop the spread of illegal guns, including new law enforcement efforts targeting “middlemen” and gun-running
- connections to employment and economic alternatives

This initiative developed is modeled after the highly successful Cease Fire Gun Violence Prevention Model currently used in Chicago. That program directs very targeted outreach and prevention efforts to “high risk” communities, and works through existing and experienced community-based organizations. Through coordinated efforts between police, counselors, and community outreach specialists, this model has helped cut violence in Chicago, and has reduced the risk of “retaliation” murders, and helped students remain in schools and find jobs as they detach from gang life. Cease Fire will serve as a voluntary advisory to Operation SNUG-qualified programs.