



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

Senate President Malcolm A. Smith and Senator Antoine Thompson Present Funding for Operation SNUG. "Erie County Community Organizations Receive \$500,000 for the Prevention of Gun Violence."

ANTOINE M THOMPSON December 8, 2009

| ISSUE: **GUN CONTROL**



(Buffalo, NY) – In an effort to cut down on illegal guns and gang violence that plagues communities across the State of New York, Senate President Malcolm A. Smith and Senator Antoine Thompson presented funding to community organizations in Erie County for

Operation SNUG, that will help local law enforcement and anti-violence community groups engage in innovative tactics to steer at-risk New Yorkers away from the culture of gangs and illegal guns.

The Senate secured \$4 million in the FY2009-10 State Budget for front-line anti-gun and gang violence prevention efforts that will benefit the hardest-hit communities across the state. As a result, Buffalo was able to receive **\$500,000** of much-needed funding that will allow for better cooperation between police and prosecutors to keep our children safe and streets secure. Community Action Organization of Erie County received **\$225,000** of which they are giving Back to Basics Outreach Ministries and Stop the Violence Coalition **\$50,000** each. People with Possibilities received **\$275,000** of which they are giving the North West Community Center and WNY Regional Education Center for Economic Development **\$50,000** each.

“Today marks a turning point in community safety,” said Senate Majority Leader 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. In cities across the state, 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.”

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.”

"Gang violence and illegal gun use has been a problem in Buffalo and across the state for too long. Operation SNUG will hopefully cut down on excessive gang violence that many

communities face," stated Senator Antoine Thompson (D- parts of Erie and Niagara Counties).

"The proliferation of illegal guns in our streets has made crime deadlier than ever," said Senator William T. Stachowski (D-C, Lake View). "That is why disarming criminals has been and must continue to be a top priority in our criminal justice system. We have a responsibility to the victims of crime and violence. And we must continue to support law enforcement in every possible way. Operation SNUG will greatly help in this effort."

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.

Every urban community in New York has fallen victim to the tale of children and guns Buffalo is no exception.

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.

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” 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.

