



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senator Malcolm a Smith, Congresswoman Carolyn Mccarthy and Former Congressman Floyd Flake Join Forces WITH Community and Civic Leaders After Rash of Shootings in Queens

MALCOLM A. SMITH January 10, 2011

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Angry local residents rally to take guns off the street after shootings in Queens and Arizona

(St. Albans, NY)- Today, New York State Senator Malcolm A. Smith, Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy and former Congressman Floyd Flake joined community and civic leaders to protest the rise of shootings and crime throughout the borough of Queens.

A recent killing at a local grocery store in Queens has alarmed residents with no answers to the murder. The increase in shootings within the last several months has caused concerns to the health and safety of the community. The statewide anti-gun initiative Operation SNUG was discussed at today's press conference by officials to get guns off the streets to reduce killings and violence.

“Gun violence affects us all - white or black, rich or poor - illegal guns terrorize neighborhoods and tear families apart. 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,” said Senator Smith.

Operation SNUG is a comprehensive response to gun violence that works through existing and experienced community-based organizations; SNUG utilizes small teams of violence interrupters and community outreach staff; coordinates efforts with police, community leaders, and faith leaders. The egregious act of violence this past weekend on U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona who supported the needs of her community demonstrates the need for Operation SNUG to become a national initiative.

It also demonstrates the need for the Gun Buy-Back program which was extremely successful here in New York to become a nationwide initiative. There is also a need for national support for Mayor Bloomberg's gun control program. Although the Mayor was unable to attend today's press conference he offered his full support of Operation SNUG and emphasized the need to have gun control in the nation's forefront.

“The horrific tragedy involving my colleague and many others in Tucson this weekend reminds us that we must all work together to fight gun violence in America and keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of the wrong people,” said U.S. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, who is introducing legislation to limit access to the kinds of high-capacity ammunition clips used by shooter Jared Loughner as well as the gunman who killed her husband and injured her son in a 1993 shooting. “Our goals will require a multifaceted, preventative approach like Operation SNUG, engaging community members and helping them improve the safety of their own neighborhoods.”

Former Congressman Floyd Flake said: “During my tenure in Congress the safety of my constituents was always one of my top priorities. Senseless acts of gun violence must end immediately. I want to commend Senator Smith and Congresswoman McCarthy for taking the lead and trying to make our community safer.”

Another pertinent program that needs to be re-visited to curb gun violence is the process of micro-stamping in which lasers are used to make tiny engravings on internal mechanisms so that when a gun is fired, information identifying the make, model and serial number will be stamped onto the cartridge. Police could use that information to track down a gun's last legal owner, the store where it was sold and, just maybe, find a lead to the person who committed the crime. New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman who was also unable to attend the press conference and who is a strong advocate of micro-stamping, spoke with Senator Smith and expressed his desire to see micro-stamping pass in the legislature.

“New- age technology such as micro-stamping is vital to curbing gun violence. If we are better able to identify a gun that is used in a shooting we will be able to better identify the gun's owner,” said Senator Smith. “Thousands of people will likely die this year as a result of gun violence, and many of them will be young people. Operation SNUG and micro-stamping are both vital to a new age of community safety in the 21st Century. It will provide the support that anti-violence programs need and will help us save lives.”

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Photos available at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/malcolmasmith/>

(Malcolm A. Smith is the New York State Senate Immediate Past President Pro Tempore (2008-10))