



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## Assemblyman Karim Camara and State Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson Announce June as Gun Violence Awareness Month in New York State and the Start of a Five Year Plan to Reduce Gun Violence

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON April 17, 2013

| ISSUE: **GUN CONTROL**

**A Black or Latino youth has a 56% increased likelihood of being injured by gun violence than a motor vehicle accident, this is akin to a public health crisis”**

Albany, NY- Today (April 17<sup>th</sup>) New York State Assemblyman Karim Camara, Chair of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus along with Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson issued a joint resolution declaring June as Gun Violence Awareness Month and announced the start of a five year plan to reduce gun violence.

“What we have is a crisis in many urban landscapes across the country; I would go so far as to call it a public health crisis. Young Black and Latino men are falling victim to violence at an alarming rate, of the gun crimes committed in New York City in 2010, 96% of the victims were black or Latino. Gun violence is the leading cause of death for a black youth in America, with over 56% likelihood. For Black families, the chance of a male child dying from a gunshot wound is 62% higher than the chance of him dying in a motor-vehicle crash. Numbers like these beg for rational concerted action,” said Assembly member Karim Camara, who today announced the first phase of a five-year plan to reduce

gun violence by introducing legislative resolutions designating June as “Gun Violence Awareness Month.”

This resolution, in addition to the companion resolutions and proclamations simultaneously today announced in Buffalo, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Yonkers, Hempstead, Ulster County, Westchester County, Suffolk County, Oswego County, Bronx County and New York County, are the first of their kind in the nation. Typically, June is the month each year when gun violence rises.

“Starting this June, communities all across New York will come together to devise programs, events, activities, and working group sessions to change the culture surrounding gun violence. The goals around Gun Violence Awareness Month are three fold, to (i) promote greater awareness about gun violence and foster community urgency to eradicate it, (ii) concentrate annual heightened attention to gun violence during the month it starts to rise, (iii) bring citizens and thought leaders together in the months leading up to June to develop ways to end gun violence,” said Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson.

“Designating June as Gun Violence Awareness Month will make New York the first state in the nation to do so. This idea is not Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative; it does not pit gun owners against those who do not own a gun. It is an idea that brings every New Yorker together to say, ‘we abhor gun violence, we find it to be a crisis in our communities and we want it eliminated.’ It took time for us to buckle our seat belts automatically, refrain from littering on our streets and highways, and even curb our dogs. But we did it. And through sustained attention to gun violence, public policy and community initiatives we can end gun violence too,” said Camara.

In addition to the statewide resolution, mayors, county executives and county legislatures across the state are designating June as ‘Gun Violence Awareness Month’ for their communities.

QUOTES:

"Today's introduction of a resolution to designate June as "Gun Violence Awareness Month" is just one more example of how New Yorkers are demanding changes to our nation's guns laws. Educating the public about guns and the violence they cause in our communities is more important than ever but increased awareness is only the first step. In order to truly protect our communities, we need Washington to fix the broken background check system and prevent guns from getting in the hands of criminals." **New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.**

"Gun violence is a national issue, and it is unfortunate that our residents here in the Bronx and across the state have to constantly look over their shoulder in fear of losing their lives or the life of a loved one. I strongly believe that in order to prevent this senseless act of violence we must continue to have an open dialogue within our communities to educate our residents while also stand against those who continue to terrorize our neighborhoods. I applaud Assembly member Karim Camara and State Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson for introducing this important resolution that will help make sure that we continue the discussion and bring annual attention to gun violence. I as well as the residents of the Bronx support this statewide initiative to designate the month of June as 'Gun Violence Awareness Month' in New York," said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

"I am proud to join other New York communities and state leaders to shine a spotlight on the horrors of gun violence," said **Rochester Mayor Thomas S. Richards.** "Illegal guns have plagued our streets for far too long and they have contributed to the deaths of too many lives full of promise. Anything we can do to end this pain and suffering is a valuable and worthwhile undertaking."

"I am pleased to help promote this ground-breaking initiative focused on stopping gun violence across our nation by introducing a resolution in Westchester County proclaiming June as Gun Violence Awareness Month here as well," said **Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairman Ken Jenkins.** "The never-ending series of tragedies associated with the proliferation of firearms in the

United States must be addressed now. The national consensus is that something has to be done to stop this problem, and raising awareness of the issue is a good way to start us toward finding the answers we need."

"Establishing a gun violence awareness month is crucial to developing a community dialogue about ending this disturbing problem," said **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner**. "Gun violence is a plague on our cities and we must resolve to do whatever we can to prevent its continued, pervasive spread. Through enacting a Gun Violence Awareness Month in our cities and in our state, we can help build a new forum for discussion between law enforcement, civic and faith leaders, elected officials, and the people of our communities. Together, we can examine the causes and create meaningful solutions to the scourge of gun violence."

"Gun violence is an ever-present threat in New York, and it is shocking to realize that more than 110 New Yorkers have lost their lives to such violence since the tragedy in Newtown," said **Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer**. "We owe it to the families and children who have been affected by this violence to bring it to an end, and I believe Gun Violence Awareness Month will promote such an awareness—becoming part of a national conversation that has never been more timely."

"I am proud to join my colleagues across the State in joining the efforts to eliminate gun violence across our nation," said **Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano**. "Unfortunately, too many times, cities and local communities are being plagued with gun violence affecting our way of life. Recognizing June as Gun Violence Awareness Month is a step in the right direction in promoting awareness and preventing the tragedies that are often the result of illegal guns on our streets."

"We in Madison County do not condone any violence against others in any form," said **John Becker Chairman of Madison County Board of Supervisors**. "Whether it is domestic gun violence, violence against women or even work place violence, society needs to be aware of all violence and needs to

prevent it whenever possible. Citizens have the right to be free safe anywhere in our great state and nation."

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