



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Kennedy Announces State Gearing Up to Re-launch Operation SNUG

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY September 11, 2013

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*Operation SNUG – which is guns spelled backwards – aims to reverse local trends in violent crime and gang activity.*

*Senator Kennedy led fight to get funding for Operation SNUG reinstated in state budget. Kennedy says state will make \$2 million available for Operation SNUG projects.*

*Kennedy: Operation SNUG will target neighborhoods hardest hit by street violence and apply a tried-and-tested model of outreach and intervention to cut down on gang activity and reduce violent crime.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – In February, Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, invited community leaders and Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, D-Yonkers, to join him on Fillmore Avenue in Buffalo to announce a new [fight to pursue an amendment to the state budget that would reinstate funding for an anti-violence program known as Operation SNUG](#), which has helped curb gang activity in communities across the state. The funding was successfully restored in the final 2013-2014 state budget, and today, Senator Kennedy announced the state is gearing up to put those funds to work and re-launch Operation SNUG in Buffalo and several other cities in New York State.

Kennedy said the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, which will oversee the program funds, has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for this neighborhood violence prevention project. The RFP seeks applications from non-profits that want to direct Operation SNUG in targeted neighborhoods in cities throughout the state. The state will make \$2 million available for Operation SNUG projects statewide, and the deadline for applications is October 16, 2013.

Operation SNUG – which is guns spelled backwards – aims to reverse local trends in violent crime and gang activity. It's designed to follow the successful Cure Violence (formerly known as Chicago CeaseFire) model that has been employed in neighborhoods throughout Chicago, Illinois to cut down on street violence.

“Gang violence has threatened the safety of our streets. Gunfire has torn through our homes and parks. And local families have had to endure the devastating consequences of death and destruction. Enough is enough,” said Senator Kennedy. “Operation SNUG presents a new way forward. It's an innovative solution to a problem that needs a sustained and relentless focus. Through this program, we'll target the neighborhoods hardest hit by street violence

and apply a tried-and-tested model of street outreach and violence intervention to cut down on gang activity and reduce violent crime from the frontlines. Operation SNUG puts violence interrupters to work in the community, intervening in potentially violent situations and striving to calm disputes before they turn deadly.”

The RFP for Operation SNUG is accessible on the website of the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services at <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ofpa/pdfdocs/Neighborhood-Violence-Prevention-Project-RFP-8-2013.pdf>. For more information, you can also contact Senator Kennedy’s office at [716-826-2683](tel:716-826-2683).

SNUG programs utilize grassroots neighborhood outreach, public awareness campaigns and community mobilization to engage youth, alter the mindset and transform local norms. It’s a hands-on, street-level approach to prevent violence by shifting attitudes, changing ways of thinking and interrupting disputes before they spiral out of control.

In addition to the street outreach workers and violence interrupters employed by the program, Operation SNUG partners with community leaders, local activists, faith-based leaders and law enforcement officials in a cooperative effort to prevent violence.

It’s an innovative idea, but it’s not new to New York State. In 2009, the State Legislature allocated \$4 million to implement Operation SNUG in eight cities across the state. Buffalo was one of those cities. The program demonstrated initial success, but after the original funding allocation was depleted, most operations were forced to shut down.

Officials from the Community Action Organization of Erie County say Operation SNUG led to a marked decline in street violence in the 14215 and 14211 zip-code areas in Buffalo. In Albany, shootings dropped by 29 percent during the first eight months of Operation SNUG.

In Rochester, there was a 40 percent decline in shooting victims over the course of SNUG's first six months, and violent altercations fell to a 10-year low in targeted neighborhoods. And In the Chicago neighborhood where Cure Violence was launched, shootings were decreased 67 percent in its first year.

“We fought hard to secure funding to re-launch Operation SNUG, knowing that when done right, this anti-violence model has been proven to prevent shootings and ultimately save lives,” Kennedy said. “This up-front investment in violence prevention will strengthen our community and can lead to substantial savings for taxpayers. It will reduce incarceration costs by stopping crime before it happens, boost property values by improving neighborhood safety and inspire young people to be forces of positive change here in the City of Buffalo.”

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*