



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## SENATOR MALCOLM A. SMITH, STATE AND CITY OFFICIALS JOINED RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAM TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE AND CRIME

MALCOLM A. SMITH July 27, 2012



New York State Senator Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans) was joined by Senator Jose Peralta (D- East Elmhurst) Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Bayside) and dozens of religious leaders from across the city to announce a new program to reduce crime and gun violence in the City of New York. Churches, mosques and other religious institutions will act as policing centers for the local community.

The citywide movement is being kicked off as part of the *My Community and US* effort. My Community and Us is a new initiative to Redesign and Redefine the Relationship between faith-based organizations, corporate America, government and private foundations to benefit communities around New York.

The initiative calls for all clergy to take 3 pro-active steps:

- 1) To devote a portion of time each week from now until the end of summer in their respective houses of worship condemning the gun and gang violence.
- 2) To participate in a citywide day of prayer and fasting on the first and last weekend in the month of August.
- 3) To serve as an annex to the police department where individuals who see something can safely say something to their faith leaders.

“In the words of gospel artist William McDowell ‘we can’t go back, we won’t go back to the way it use to be.’ Twenty years ago we had 7 people either shot or killed every day in New York City. It seems as though the new bling in our community is guns. Therefore, I fully support the faith-based leaders of the *My Community and US* effort,” stated Senator Smith.

**Dr. Joseph Mattera, overseeing Bishop of Christ Covenant Coalition and Chair of the *My Community And Us* Steering Committee said:** “I am pleased with the results of the press conference, as it reflected the great collaboration between clergy, elected officials, businesses and the community. That has been the mission of the *My Community And Us initiative*, which was the brain child of myself and Senator Smith.”

**Rev. Floyd Flake, Senior Pastor of the Greater Allen Cathedral of New York said:** “It’s not what you do on Sunday mornings that counts, but rather it’s what you do outside of the walls of the church that count. Churches have to play an active role in their communities.”

**Rev. A.R. Bernard, Senior Pastor of the Christian Cultural Center said:** “We are committed to not only being a part of this conversation but also getting in the trenches and truly attacking the causes and the subtext of this gun violence.”

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