



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Cracking Down On the Rise Of Gang Violence in New York

ANDREW J. LANZA May 19, 2017



Gang violence has been on the rise in far too many urban and suburban communities throughout New York. From the many drug-related incidents taking place in Upstate cities, to the wanton violence recently perpetrated on Long Island by the murderous gang known as MS-13, gang violence is a critical problem that needs to be stopped.

That's why I recently voted to approve a comprehensive bill designed to fight the deadly criminal behavior of gangs throughout New York by creating the "Criminal Street Gang Enforcement and Prevention Act." This important criminal justice reform will help

prosecute gang violence and stop gang recruitment through proactive community outreach.

For the first time ever, the legislation would legally define criminal street gangs in New York's penal statutes, giving prosecutors more options when charging offenders. Classifying and identifying this type of criminal activity will also help law enforcement better track gangs. Under this bill, penalties would be increased and new felonies created for individuals who benefit from gang activity, participate in gang activity, and recruit youth or adults to participate in gang activities.

A new Criminal Street Gang Prevention Fund would also be established to support violence prevention and gang crime deterrence services provided by not-for-profit organizations. The measure would be funded partially through forfeited assets obtained following convictions for gang activity. In addition, schools would consult with the state Division Criminal Justice Services to implement a model curriculum focused on gang violence prevention. This will help educators interact in a positive manner with children and their parents to assist in developing positive values, self-esteem, knowledge, and skills that can lead to productive, gang-free, and drug-free lives.

This bill takes a comprehensive approach to protect our families by preventing vulnerable young people from being recruited by gangs and strengthening our laws to break up violent and dangerous gang activity. It would not only strengthen the legal options available to prosecute street gangs, but would also help address many root causes of gang recruitment and growth.

I will be sure to keep you posted on the status of this important legislation, as well as my further efforts to help eliminate gangs and the victimization of those in their wake.