



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senate Passes Bill to Crack Down On The Rise Of Gang Violence In New York

ANDREW J. LANZA May 15, 2018

| ISSUE: **GANG VIOLENCE**



*Senate Bill (S6211), sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza (R-C-I, Staten Island), establishes a Class D felony charge for gang members who seek to recruit new members on school grounds. The legislation would help prevent gang activity in and around schools by making it a crime to coerce, solicit, recruit, or induce another person to join or remain a member of a criminal street gang. It also allows the designation of “Gang Free School Zones” on school grounds to help protect students and staff at risk.*

**Two Measures Take Holistic Approach to Investigating, Prosecuting, and Preventing Gang Activity in Communities and Schools Across the State**

The New York State Senate this week passed two necessary pieces of legislation to help put an end to the deadly criminal behavior of gangs throughout New York. The measures specifically focus on protecting children and teens from gang activity, and are part of the Senate Majority's Blueprint for a Stronger New York Security Agenda to enhance safety and security throughout the state.

Gang violence in urban and suburban areas throughout New York has recently increased, and the specific rise of MS-13 – the gang believed to be behind at least 25 lives lost on Long Island alone in the past two years – shows the need for a more comprehensive method of tackling this type of crime.

Senate Bill (S6211), sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza (R-C-I, Staten Island), establishes a Class D felony charge for gang members who seek to recruit new members on school grounds. The legislation would help prevent gang activity in and around schools by making it a crime to coerce, solicit, recruit, or induce another person to join or remain a member of a criminal street gang. It also allows the designation of "Gang Free School Zones" on school grounds to help protect students and staff at risk.

One of the bills (S2410A), sponsored by Senator Martin Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), creates the "Criminal Street Gang Enforcement and Prevention Act" to better prosecute gang violence and stop gang recruitment through proactive community outreach. The act would help stomp out the scourge of gang violence in New York through a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Strengthening the legal options available to prosecute street gangs by legally defining

criminal street gangs in New York's penal statutes for the first time ever;

- Creating anti-crime programs that focus on patterns of criminal gang activity and organization, including the new Criminal Street Gang Prevention Fund, which would be partially funding through forfeited assets obtained following convictions for gang activity;
- Expanding education, intervention, and model curriculums to prevent the growth of street gangs, in consultation with New York's schools and the state Division of Criminal Justice Services; and
- Establishing an ongoing system of tracking gang activity.

Senator Golden said, "As a former New York City Police Officer, I know that gangs on our streets destroy communities, schools, and families. This legislation approved by the State Senate will establish stricter penalties and education programs to reduce gang violence. We must not only work to prevent the formation of gangs, but we should penalize, track and educate their members, so that the dangers they cause on our streets can end. The State Assembly should no longer stand as a roadblock to this bill becoming law."

In addition to the legislation passed this week, this year's final budget provides \$500,000 to local law enforcement to support youth outreach programs that help prevent MS-13 or other gang violence in Nassau and Suffolk counties. An additional \$5.8 million was secured by the Senate in the budget for other local law enforcement initiatives including equipment and technology enhancement, as well as anti-drug, anti-violence, and crime control and prevention programs.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.