



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt Demands Answers From Hochul on Drained Multi-Million Dollar Gun Fund

ROBERT G. ORTT January 31, 2022

| ISSUE: **CRIME, GUN VIOLENCE, EMERGENCY FUNDING**



**ALBANY, NY - Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt** on Friday, January 28th sent a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul questioning critical spending details of a nearly-dry government fund meant to stem the scourge of gun violence in New York communities. The letter raised serious concerns about where the taxpayer money has actually gone, in addition to the disparity of support and resources given to local police departments and District Attorneys throughout the state.

“Considering the size and scope of this massive expenditure of taxpayer dollars — as well as the fact that gun violence and violent crime continue to plague cities across our state — we are writing to request detailed information regarding how this money has been spent,” **wrote Leader Ortt.**

[Recent news reports](#) indicate that the state has spent virtually all of the \$159 in emergency funding to combat gun violence that was announced last July by former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. Of the \$159 million in that fund, it appears two-thirds of the gun fund went to local civic groups and politically connected non-law enforcement entities, all as the state-wide crime crisis continued to surge.

As Governor Hochul recently announced plans to replenish the fund in this year's state budget, the results of the original nearly \$159 million spent have come under scrutiny. In particular, one non-profit group was approved for \$18.5 million in funding to help create 2,400 long-term jobs for young adults in communities distressed by gun violence. It has been reported that this initiative has [only created about 20 jobs](#), according to the state Department of Labor.

The questions about the \$159 million emergency funding include:

- Which government agencies, groups or entities have received funding?
- What process was used to determine how this money would be spent, and who made the ultimate selection of funding recipients?
- Do you have any data showing a correlation between the millions spent and a reduction (or increase) of violence?
- What metrics are being utilized to determine the success or failure of these efforts?

In addition to posing some of these critical questions, Leader Ortt, in his letter to Governor Hochul, proposed reforms to future funding related to curbing violence. One major concern was the lack of funding provided to the District Attorney offices that are responsible for investigating and successfully prosecuting violent offenders. Many District Attorney offices across the state are still struggling to comply with the recently enacted discovery reforms.

Since 2019, Democrats have passed a slew of soft-on-crime, pro-criminal policies, resulting in a growing crime crisis in New York. In that same time, Leader Ortt and the Republican Conference have championed much-needed measures to curb the increase in violence. Earlier this year, Senate Republicans were joined by law enforcement and local leaders to call for an immediate restoration of public safety in the state.

[The plan to Restore Public Safety](#), unveiled under the '[Take Back New York](#)' 2022 Agenda, includes:

#### **Protecting Those Who Protect Us:**

- Invest in law enforcement;
- Provide them with the support they need to make our communities safe and serve those in need; and

- Fight Democrat efforts to “Defund the Police.”

### **Rejecting Dangerous “Reforms” like Cashless Bail:**

- End cashless bail, restore judicial discretion and reject proposals like “Clean Slate”;
- Require state agencies to be transparent about the effects of public safety policies; and
- Enact policies that get dangerous individuals off our streets.

### **Reforming the Broken Parole System:**

- Recenter the Parole process around the protection and rights of crime victims and their families;
- Ensure that cop-killers, serial killers, child killers, and other dangerous murderers can NEVER be released; and
- Reject dangerous Democrat proposals like “Elder Parole” and “Fair and Timely Parole.”

### **Passing a Victims’ Justice Agenda:**

- Strengthen penalties for violent and repeat offenders, as well as hate crimes;
- Create and support more victims’ services and resources; and
- Invest in proven mental health, addiction, and homeless programs.

“The Governor’s refusal to do policy changes on bail reform because she ‘wants to see more data,’ yet she dumped hundreds of millions of tax dollars into state programs that have shown zero tangible results. Before hardworking taxpayers are asked to spend one dollar more — and before even more New Yorkers fall victim to this wave of violent crime — we need to know as quickly as possible if this funding has had any meaningful public safety impact in our local communities,” **concluded Leader Ortt.**

A copy of the letter is attached.

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