



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

## Gun Violence Victims, Advocates, Law Enforcement, Electeds Urge Senate to Include Microstamping in Budget

DANIEL L. SQUADRON February 14, 2012

| ISSUE: **CRIME**

### **Governor's Budget Proposal Repeals CoBIS, Leaving Gap in Crime Detection**

ALBANY – Today, family members who have lost loved ones to gun violence, along with advocates and law enforcement joined Senators and Assemblymembers at the State Capitol to urge the State Senate to include microstamping in its budget proposal. Microstamping, which connects shell casings from crime scenes to the first purchaser of a weapon, would provide law enforcement with a critical tool to solve gun crimes. Microstamping has passed the Assembly several times, but so far the Senate has been unwilling to approve it.

In his executive budget proposal, Governor Cuomo proposed the repeal of a pistol and revolver ballistic identification database – known as CoBIS – creating a gap in the ability of law enforcement to link shell casings back to the gun that fired them.

Microstamping ensures that when a gun is fired, information identifying its make, model and serial number is stamped onto the ejected cartridge as a tiny alpha-numeric code (or 'microstamp'). Microstamped shell casings make it possible for law enforcement to trace and determine critical facts about the guns used in many unsolved crimes, even if the crime gun itself is never found.

Microstamping has the support of numerous law enforcement and municipal officials around the state, including over 100 mayors and 80 police departments and law enforcement organizations.

Advocates and family survivors of gun violence met with Senators today to discuss the need for microstamping in New York State and urge its inclusion in the Senate budget proposal. New Yorkers Against Gun Violence also released "Anonymous Shell Casings: Unsolved Crimes Waiting for Microstamping to be Passed". This new report highlights more than 140 news articles of unsolved gun crimes in New York in which no gun was recovered but shell casings were recovered. "Anonymous Shell Casings" highlights the devastating impact of unsolved gun crimes on families across New York, and the frustration experienced by law enforcement when there is little or no evidence. To read "Anonymous Shell Casings," visit <http://www.nyagv.org/documents/ShellCasingsAnonymousReport.pdf>.

"My brother's unsolved murder is a gut-wrenching experience that our family must endure daily. Elected officials are unaware of what challenges law enforcement officials face when they willingly pursue offenders while outmatched through more savvy methods of evasion. We fully support legislation that will aid our protectors in apprehending, and above all, preventing others from having to experience the untold sadness felt by the grieving family members of those stolen by gun violence," said **Dionne Gordon**, whose brother was shot and killed in front of his parents' home in Jamaica, Queens in 2010. Twenty-five shell casings were found at the scene but there have been no arrests.

"Gun violence plagues communities around New York every single day--as mothers are shot picking children up from school, grandmothers are gunned down in their own kitchens, and two year olds are shot in their car seats. The sad truth is hundreds of heinous gun crimes remain unsolved every year in New York and we can do more to help solve them by giving law enforcement the tools they need," **Jackie Hilly, Executive Director of New Yorkers Against**

**Gun Violence**, said. “While parents bury their innocent children and grieve for a lifetime, a murderer remains free. We must not allow criminals to run free when microstamping, a simple tool, can help solve gun crimes and give grieving families the justice they deserve. The New York State Senate should stand with victims and law enforcement and include microstamping in the 2012 budget. Including microstamping in the budget will assist those sworn to protect and defend us, and will take guns away from criminals before they have a chance to use them again.”

“We need to arm law enforcement with the resources needed to disarm our streets,” said **State Senator Jose Peralta**, who sponsors microstamping legislation in the Senate. “Throughout New York State, hundreds of shooting cases, including murders, go unsolved every year because police are unable to connect evidence found at the scene of a shooting to a perpetrator. Often the best leads at the scene are shell casings, but, in the absence of microstamping technology, police are rarely able to connect a shell casing back to the gun that fired it. Microstamping is a 21st Century law enforcement tool that will make cities and towns across New York safer by helping put violent gun criminals behind bars. We owe it to the victims whose murders remain unsolved to make microstamping the law in New York.”

“Without microstamping, we are depriving law enforcement of a critical crime-solving tool. It is mind-boggling that we allow hundreds of cases of murder and gun violence to go unsolved each year without providing police with the ability to connect shell casings with their guns,” said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**, who co-sponsors microstamping legislation in the Senate. “The Senate should support microstamping in the budget. The vast majority of stakeholders, from law enforcement to mayors to crime victims, agree: microstamping is critical. I thank New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, the advocates and victims who are here today, and my colleagues in the Senate and the Assembly for pushing to make microstamping a reality.”

"Microstamping is all about public safety and catching criminals. The family survivors can speak to that issue as no one else can. Law Enforcement Officer Maurice Gordon was shot and killed. 25 shell casings were retrieved. No suspect, no gun, no leads. What do you tell his family when there is a preponderance of evidence by way of shell casings, and you have the means to stop these crimes, but not the political will," said **Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel**, the sponsor of microstamping legislation in the Assembly.

"Legislators, advocates, mayors, and police from across New York agree that we need to enact microstamping legislation, and we need to do it now," said **Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh**, a co-sponsor of the bill in the Assembly. "Time is of the essence; the sooner microstamping becomes law, the sooner it will help solve violent crimes, deter illegal gun trafficking, and ultimately save lives."

"Law enforcement needs every possible resource to effectively investigate and prosecute violent gun crimes," **Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice** said. "Microstamping provides a critical starting point for detectives and invaluable physical evidence at trial, and I strongly encourage the State Senate to include microstamping in its forthcoming budget proposal."

###