



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

State Sen. Malcolm Smith Secures \$3M in Funding for Anti-Gun Violence Program - "Operation SNUG"

Malcolm A. Smith

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(Albany, NY)- State Sen. Malcolm Smith (D-Hollis), Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the Independent Democratic Conference secures \$3M in funding for the anti-gun violence program - **"Operation SNUG"**

Operation SNUG ("guns" spelled backwards) has been implemented in 10 cities across New York State. The program's mission is to stop shootings and killings in communities experiencing disproportionately high rates of gun violence. Reputable peers act as mediators for high risk individuals, intervening to stop violence before it occurs. Neighborhood based coalitions of residents, religious leaders and law enforcement work together to change behaviors and social norms that perpetuate violence.

SNUG was founded by Senator Smith in 2009 as a state legislative initiative with programs in Albany, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, Mt. Vernon and the boroughs of Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn in New York City. It offers services such as case management, mentoring, anti-aggressive therapy, family counseling, vocational training, drug and alcohol counseling, and, in some cases, even parent counseling.

"After the program's launch, my colleagues and I received letters and phone calls from parents, clergy and community leaders statewide, all expressing their gratitude for the good that SNUG is bringing to their communities," Smith said. "This \$3M is a great investment to operate SNUG programs statewide by ensuring the continued success of SNUG for the next fiscal year.

The program was based on the successful "CeaseFire Chicago" initiative, a model which reduced shootings in target areas by between 16-35 percent, according to a Department of Justice study, and helped between 85-99 percent of high risk clients find jobs, education and drug treatment. Some 99 percent of CeaseFire clients reported that the program had a positive effect on their lives.

Funding the SNUG program is a wise investment when one considers that every violent crime comes with large costs associated with medical care, investigation, legal defense, incarceration, and in some cases, the incalculable toll of human life.

The annual costs for all non-fatal hospital admitted injuries for all assaults in New York State are about \$3 billion, and firearms specific non-fatal hospital admitted injuries are over \$424 million. According to the state Office of Children and Family Services, the average yearly cost in 2006 to incarcerate a youth in OCFS secure facility was over \$127,000.

"Gun violence is a comprehensive problem that requires a comprehensive solution," Smith said. "I am proud to have created the Operation SNUG initiative, one of the first comprehensive state-sponsored anti-gun violence programs in New York."

"I would like to thank Majority Leader Jeff Klein and my IDC colleagues for their continued support of this creative and effective anti-gun and gang violence program," Smith added.