



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senator Golden Introduces Major Legislative Initiative to Combat Criminal Street Gangs

MARTIN J. GOLDEN January 20, 2015

Brooklyn - State Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn) today is announcing that he has introduced the New York State Criminal Street Gang Act, major legislation that targets criminal street gangs and their activities in this State.

The bill has two major focuses — criminalizing the activity of street gangs in a significant and comprehensive way, coupled with a major effort to educate youths and prevent the growth of the gangs through anti-gang training and curriculums and activities in schools and funding for not for profit agencies that work with at-risk youths.

On the criminal side, the bill targets criminal street gangs, defined as any group of two or more people with a common name, sign, dress, symbols, tattoos, or other marks, that engage in a pattern of criminal street gang activity for its own benefit or for the benefit of one or more of its members. A pattern of criminal street gang activity is two or more felonies committed within three years of each other. The measure also creates several new criminal street gang crimes, including solicitation of minors to join the gang, and accepting the benefits of the gang's activities. The bill provides for enhanced sentences for all of these activities.

On the prevention side, the bill requires the Education Department and the Division of Criminal Justice Services to 1) develop programs of in-service training in gang violence for teachers, counselors, and others in the education establishment, and 2) develop a model gang violence prevention curriculum. The bill also allows boards of education to adopt a dress code that may require a school wide uniform, or prevent the wearing of gang-related clothing.

Finally, the bill surcharges gang-related crimes and places the money into a criminal street gang prevention fund, from which the education department may make grants to not for profit agencies working to prevent or deter at-risk youth from participating in criminal street gangs.

Senator Marty Golden stated, “As a former New York City Police Officer, I know that gangs on our streets destroy communities, schools, and families. In the wake of the heroin and prescription drug crisis that is taking too many young lives, this is definitely the time to create 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.”

Among the bill’s other sponsors are Senators Lanza and Felder, both from New York City, and the chairs of the Senate Finance Committee, the Codes Committee, and the crime and Corrections Committee.