



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## State Senator Jeff Klein & Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson Launch 2015 Court Watchers Program

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 5, 2015

| ISSUE: **CRIME, CONSTITUENTS CORNER, COURTS, CRIMINAL**

*Klein, Local Elected Officials, Community Leaders & Bronxites Join Together to Fight Back Against Quality of Life Crimes*

**BRONX, NY - State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)**, in partnership with **Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson**, community leaders and Bronxites announced the launch of the 2015 Court Watchers Program at the activist group's first meeting on March 4th in the Bronx. The program, which has seen widespread success in past years, works to increase awareness of quality of life crimes like graffiti, vandalism and petty larceny and impose harsher sentences on habitual offenders.

"As someone born and raised in the Bronx, I want to make sure that it remains a safe place for children and families to live, work and go to school. When mischief-makers come into the community and spray paint signs at places of worship or break into reputable small businesses owned by hardworking families, they need to know that they will be held accountable," **said Senator Jeff Klein**. "The court watchers program plays a vital role in the Bronx, helping to deter criminal activity and keep our neighborhoods safe. Today, we send a message that quality of life crimes will not be tolerated in our community."

The first Court Watchers meeting of 2015 was held at the district offices of Senator Klein and featured an hour long training seminar on the judicial process. Topics included standard courtroom procedures and an overview of statutes concerning vandalism, larceny and more. In coming weeks, participants in the program will sit in on targeted court hearings and track the progress of cases concerning quality of life crimes before local courts.

“Criminal courtrooms are open to the public, as well as they should be,” **said Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson.** “The Bronx D.A.’s Office welcomes the opportunity for people to see the pains we go through to represent victims, punish and/or rehabilitate the guilty, and protect the rights of the innocent.”

The Court Watchers Program was first established in 2010. For more information on the Court Watchers Program or to volunteer, please visit:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/senator/jeffrey-d-klein> or call (718) 822-2049.