



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Sanders Hosts 2nd Stop Violence Meeting in Wake of Civilian and Police Shootings

JAMES SANDERS JR. July 22, 2016



Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) hosted a Stop the Violence Community Meeting on Thursday evening in Far Rockaway to discuss the recent civilian shootings by police which took place in Minnesota and Louisiana. The event was aimed at bringing the community together, allowing residents to vent their frustrations and giving attendees the opportunity to propose changes that they would like to see implemented.

“The police are not the problem,” Sanders said. “The police are a symptom of the problem. The problem is systemic. It’s a system that promotes aggressive policing rather than community policing, and until you change that system, we are going to continue to have these same discussions.”

Sanders has vehemently condemned the assassination of five police officers in Dallas and three in Baton Rouge, whom were allegedly targeted in retaliation for the shooting deaths of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling.

The overall consensus at the meeting was that not all police are bad or racist and should not be viewed as such, just as not all members of minority communities are violent or criminals. Many said they believed a greater understanding and mutual respect by both sides is needed moving forward. There were also a number of suggestions regarding what other improvements could be made.

On the law enforcement side, proposals included providing incentives for police to live in the communities where they work, so that they could have a more personal relationship with residents; bringing back the beat cop style of community policing as a way of breaking down barriers; and increasing accountability and punishment for officers who break the law as well as for officers who witness the illegal activity and fail to report it.

On the community side, some advocated for more anti-violence and youth programming as a way to reduce crime in the neighborhood, thereby requiring less police presence while others called for increasing community attendance at Precinct Community Council meetings, so that policing issues could be reported immediately and directly to the commanding officer or community affairs unit.

Sanders' meeting was attended by area residents as well as community and civic leaders. It took place at the office of the Rockaway Youth Task Force, who also co-sponsored the event

along with the 101st Precinct Community Council and Rock Safe Streets. It was the second such discussion hosted by Sanders in response to the shooting deaths of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling by police officers. The first meeting was held in Jamaica on July 9, 2016