

New York State Senator

JAMES S. ALESÌ

55th Senate District



Reporting to the
55th Senate District

PREVENTING GANG VIOLENCE

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Dear Friends:

It has become more apparent that we are plagued by the problem of gang violence in our neighborhoods and schools. Incidents of violence and graffiti vandalism have increased. The threat to our community, our schools and especially our children is clear. Gangs commit violent crimes against each other and innocent citizens alike. They deal drugs in our neighborhoods and schools. In some cases they make our children afraid to attend school or go outside and play. The time has come to put an end to gang violence and activity in our community. Gangs know there is strength in numbers. We should apply this same principle to act as a whole community to stop gangs in our schools and neighborhoods. If we act together we can make our neighborhoods and schools safe places to live, work, learn and play. This pamphlet is part of that effort. We must come to recognize the signs of gang activity in the community and in the home. The more we learn about gangs, the better we will be prepared to deal with them effectively and to prevent our children from being involved with them.

To parents of gang members and members of communities plagued by gang violence and activities I ask that you do not give up hope. Your child or children can get out of the gangs. They can be saved. We in the State Legislature are aware of the gang problem throughout the state. We are working on solutions to this complex and difficult issue.

To the children in our communities I ask that you also have hope. Stay in school. Don't be pressured to join a gang. Gang activities are not "cool"; they are foolish and dangerous. Joining a gang will get you arrested, hurt or killed. Gangs say that they are a "family," but this is not so. Gangs frequently commit acts of violence against their own members. There is no real love or family within the ranks of a gang.

To gang members themselves I say that your activities are destroying your lives and the lives of those who truly care about you. Gang violence is just one child against another. For what? Colors? Graffiti? Something you or someone else writes on a wall is not worth your life. Once you take someone else's life, it can never be restored. You can get out of a gang. Your family, church and community can help you. If you are afraid to leave the gang, ask yourself why you risk death, injury or imprisonment for people you are afraid of. Being afraid of your friends and your rivals is no way to live. We as a community still care about you and your future. We simply don't accept your gang activity.

As always, it is a privilege serving as your Senate advocate here in our State Capitol.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Alesi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "A".

Senator James S. Alesi