

## Reducing Gang Violence in the Commonwealth



State Senator Jarrett T. Barrios (D-Cambridge)  
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Public Safety

## Overview of Gang Violence in MA

- Gang recruitment, violence and intimidation is a statewide problem.
- Across the United States, gangs are present in urban and larger suburban cities.
- There is no silver bullet for combating gang violence. A coordinated, statewide strategy of focused prosecutions, community-based law enforcement, and enhanced prevention programs do make a significant difference.

## Senate Committee on Public Safety's 2005 Anti-Gang Agenda

Developed in coordination with Metropolitan Mayors Association, mayors from around the state, law enforcement and community groups.

- From "prevention to policing," a three-pronged approach because cities and towns can't be expected to do it alone:
  - **Prevention**
  - **Policing**
  - **Prosecution**

**GOAL:** *To give local communities tools and resources to combat gang violence.*

## Prevention

- Resources to support community-based violence prevention programs for at-risk youth.
  - Should work collaboratively with law enforcement, neighborhood leaders and local businesses.
  - Targeted at "High Impact" areas.
  - Ex. ROCA in Chelsea, MA.



## Policing

- Target Community Policing grants to support local police department's anti-gang efforts.
  - Encourage communication between police on the street and neighborhood groups.
- Coordination between State Police Anti-Gang Unit and local law enforcement.
  - More involvement in communities throughout the state.
  - Additional minority and multilingual officers.
  - Creation of a ballistics fingerprinting database to track of guns in crimes.
- Regional approaches, linked to community organizations, encouraged through grant process.



## Prosecution

- Establish a statewide witness protection program and stronger laws to prevent witness intimidation by gang members. (Supported by mayors, District Attorneys and Lieutenant Governor).
- Stay away orders as a condition of bail – similar to restraining orders but for gang-related cases.
- Prohibiting the illegal use of grand jury transcripts to protect witnesses in gang-related cases.
- Increased mandatory penalties creating a minimum 5 year sentence for illegally carrying a loaded firearm.

## Next steps...

- Anti-Gang Bill sponsored by Senator Barrios and Representative Stephen Canessa. Add'l co-sponsors:
  - Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
  - Senator Edward Augustus
  - Senator Stephen Buoniconfi
  - Senator Steven Panagiotakos
  - Senator Harriette Chandler
  - Senator Mark Montigny
  - Representative Timothy Toomey
  - Representative Steven Walsh
  - Representative Carl Sciorino
  - Representative Patricia Haddad
- Committee Anti-Gang Report recommendations:
  - Form the foundation of a statewide anti-gang initiative.
  - Developed in coordination with District Attorneys, Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, and others.
  - Result of day-long State House anti-gang hearing.

## For more information



Senator Jarrett T. Barrios  
Room 309, State House  
Boston, MA 02133  
617-722-1650  
Jarrett.Barrios@state.ma.us

Jason Guida  
Legislative Aide to the Joint Committee on Public Safety  
Jason.Guida@state.ma.us