



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 268

Resolution strongly supporting legislation pending in the New York State Legislature that seeks to combat the alarming increase in gang activity in schools by empowering local police departments and school officials.

By Council Members Gennaro, Vallone Jr., Recchia Jr., Fidler, Gentile, Liu, Nelson, Weprin and White Jr.

Whereas, In recent months, there has been a spate of violent gang incidents near high schools in Queens; for example, in January 2006, four Hillcrest High School students were hospitalized after a brawl between two rival gangs; in October 2005, three teenagers were beaten and stabbed by 30 suspected gang members near Newtown High School; in addition, New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) crime statistics reveal that gang-related crime increased in the 110th Precinct, which includes the neighborhoods of Elmhurst and Corona in Queens; and

Whereas, Reports from community groups and local press throughout New York State indicate a disturbingly visible rise in gang activity in similar neighborhoods throughout New York State; and

Whereas, In order to curtail gang activity in schools in Queens, as well as in New York State, New York State Senator John D. Sabini and New York State Assemblymember Jose R. Peralta announced a package of bills that would empower police and school authorities as they contend with the upswing of gang violence in communities throughout New York; and

Whereas, One bill (S06588/A10122), sponsored by State Senator Sabini and Assemblymember Peralta, seeks to define various gang activities as prosecutable crimes; this bill gives law enforcement officials new tools to fight the recruitment, retention and coercion of gang members; it also restricts the enlistment of minors to further gang activity, since youths face lesser penalties in the juvenile court system as a result of their age; this bill also calls for the abatement of premises where gang activities take place; Council Member Peter F.

Vallone Jr. also reintroduced a similar bill in the New York City Council on March 1, 2006, which was originally introduced on January 29, 2003, in relation to creating the crime of gang recruitment; and

Whereas, State Senator Sabini and Assemblymember Peralta sponsored another bill (S06586/A08321), which would authorize the superintendent of the New York State Police to establish and maintain a statewide gang database consisting of information pertaining to criminal street gang members, in order to assist state and local law enforcement agencies in the apprehension and prosecution of those suspected of gang-related crimes; this database would create one source for local police departments to access information when dealing with alleged gang members on a statewide basis; and

Whereas, A third bill (S06578/A10124), also sponsored by State Senator Sabini and Assemblymember Peralta, would allow school districts to establish policies prohibiting the wearing of gang-related apparel, markings or symbols; the penalty provided in the legislation creates an opportunity for the student to obtain counseling to understand the importance of education, as well as the need to avert gang membership; and

Whereas, Assemblymember Peralta, along with New York State Senator John L. Sampson, sponsored a bill (S01032/A10123) to provide funds to local schools by utilizing assets seized from gang members and associates; the confiscated assets will be distributed to local school districts to institute or sustain after-school programs designed to deter and prevent youths from associating with or joining street gangs; and

Whereas, A bill (S06580) sponsored by State Senator Sabini seeks to impose stricter laws against drugs and weapons at school; this legislation would provide for safer school environments by extending criminal liability of juveniles possessing weapons, expanding access to the fingerprints of juvenile offenders, authorizing the posting of gun-free zone signs, and increasing penalties for the sale of drugs on school grounds; this bill also broadens the definition of school grounds as it applies to drug-related offenses; and

Whereas, This package of gang interdiction legislation is necessary to address the troubling proliferation of gang visibility and activity in New York State localities, including New York City; now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York strongly supports legislation pending in the New

York State Legislature that seeks to combat the alarming increase in gang activity in schools by empowering local police departments and school officials.

JPV
LS #534
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