

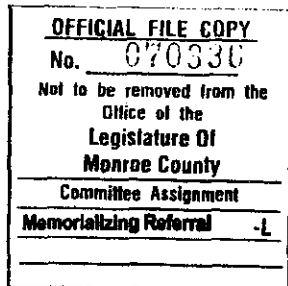


Monroe County Legislature

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LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 27

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October 5, 2007

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: Memorializing the New York State Legislature to pass, and Governor Spitzer to Sign into Law "Gang Free School Zone" Legislation (A8155, S4381) Establishing a Class D Felony of Criminal Gang Recruitment on School Grounds.

Honorable Legislators:

Gang activity and recruitment are serious problems that plague many communities across our nation, including both Rochester and Monroe County. As legislators, we take great pride in protecting the needs of our society's most vulnerable citizens: our children. As our community continues to witness devastating effects of drugs, guns, gangs, and violent crime, it is too often our children who suffer the most.

Children are often targeted by gang leaders and members at an alarmingly early age. Once coerced and initiated into a gang, it is nearly impossible for them to break free. A young life of opportunity is quickly turned into a life of crime and violence, often ending long before it should. New York State is currently one of the few states left in our nation that has not enacted legislation to protect children from gang recruitment at schools.

Local law enforcement officials and our judicial system need additional resources to prevent gang coercion and recruitment of children. In an effort to combat gang activity, State legislators have introduced a proposal (A.8155/S.4381) that would make criminal gang recruitment on school grounds a class D felony, punishable by 3 to 7 years in prison, and allow for the placement of "Gang Free School Zone" signs on school grounds.

Our schools must not be breeding grounds for gangs. We need to enact tough measures to stop gang activity and growth in our community, and to ensure that schools are a safe haven of learning and opportunity for our children.

Therefore, we urge you to join us in memorializing the New York State Legislature to pass, and Governor Spitzer to and to sign into law, "Gang Free School Zone" legislation (A.8155/S.4381).

Respectfully submitted,

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