



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

**MASSACHUSETTS BLACK AND LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS**

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**Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus Advocacy Leads to \$10m for Neighborhood-based Gun and Violent Crime Prevention**

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus (MBLLC) announced today that communities could soon have access to a new funding source aimed at curbing violence in their neighborhoods. This would come from the supplemental budget for fiscal year 2018 which includes a provision that directs \$10m to neighborhoods and municipalities with the highest rates of violent crime.

Advocacy efforts for the funding were led by Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus member Representative Andy X. Vargas (D – Haverhill) who circulated a letter in July with 40+ House members signed on in support of the request. The MBLLC also weighed in petitioning House leadership and Governor Baker to provide the much needed funding noting that 752 young people died from gun violence from 2005-2015.

“Communities across Massachusetts have long felt the effects of gun violence—especially with our youth who are out of the school system. I’m proud that the legislature continues to lead with a holistic approach to solving this public health crisis by focusing efforts both inside and outside of the classroom,” said State Representative Andy X. Vargas (D-Haverhill). “This new funding is methodical and consistent with the legislature’s commitment to making critical research-driven investments in communities facing the highest rates of gun violence.”

Residents in communities represented by MBLLC members have long pointed towards public safety as a top concern, and even more specifically, gun violence. This has grown increasingly urgent in communities such as Boston where residents recently grappled with seven homicides over a span of seven days. These incidents leave neighborhoods struggling to cope with an enduring and unshakable trauma. In communities across Massachusetts this has left residents feeling helpless, and in many cases, ignored.

“As someone who has lost loved ones to violence in Boston, I am deeply saddened by the recurring trauma that our community is forced to endure,” said MBLLC member, State Representative Chynah Tyler (D - Roxbury). She continued, “Through this neighborhood-based gun violence prevention program, we have established a mechanism to address the public health crisis that requires organizations to provide a comprehensive plan with measurable outcomes and data collection that ensure high risk young adults reach their fullest potential.”

The pilot program will target youth 17 to 24 years old through non-profit organizations, and preference will be given to organizations with demonstrated street outreach capacity. These organizations have become a cornerstone to addressing youth violence as they focus on face to face interactions in the youths' own settings.

“Gun violence is a multifaceted issue that cannot be solved by any one single tool,” said MBLLC Chair, State Representative Frank Moran (D-Lawrence). “It will require multiple intentional and deliberate actions from leaders who are willing to recognize and address the problem. That is what is being done here as we build on previous efforts to ensure that all residents in Massachusetts feel safe in their own communities.” He continued, “House Ways and Means Chair Jeffrey Sánchez heeded the concerns echoed by the MBLLC and helped assure these communities received the supports they need.”

MBLLC member Representative Jeffrey Sánchez (D – Jamaica Plain) stated, “Partnering with communities is key to preventing youth gun violence. This new fund builds on our efforts in the budget and complements our legislative initiatives as we seek to create positive, lasting impacts in young people’s lives.”

*The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus is a group of 13 state legislators who advocate for communities of color throughout the Commonwealth. For more information, please visit: [www.mablacklatinocaucus.com](http://www.mablacklatinocaucus.com)*

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