



News Release

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# Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie

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## Speaker Heastie Continues Statewide Tour in Long Island

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie was today joined by Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre as he continued his annual statewide tour with two stops in Suffolk County. Together, they visited Wyandanch SNUG, a statewide program to reduce gun violence, and the Council of Thought and Action (COTA), which helps former prisoners move their lives forward in a positive manner.

"The Assembly Majority is dedicated to addressing the root causes of gun violence, and ensuring that our citizens have the resources they need to thrive in our communities," Speaker Heastie said. "It was great to spend time at Wyandanch SNUG and at COTA, organizations that are on the ground helping to make those goals a reality here in Suffolk County. Assemblymember Jean-Pierre and I, along with our colleagues will continue to fight to make sure organizations like these have the resources they need to continue improving the lives of New Yorkers."

"Wyandanch SNUG and COTA are proving day in and day out that our communities have the power to help put an end to senseless violence and improve the lives of our friends and neighbors," Assemblymember Jean-Pierre said. "I am so glad to have Speaker Heastie here in Suffolk County today to tour these organizations that are so committed to making Suffolk County a better place to live and raise a family."

Wyandanch SNUG is one of 11 New York State Department of Justice SNUG Violence Prevention programs, and was launched in 2015. The program engages residents, private industry and community based organizations with SNUG staff to help identify and defuse community hot spots. SNUG focuses on identifying youths who are gang members or at risk for joining gangs, and provides participants with conflict resolution skills, case management services and helps with defuse incidents of violence and promotes self-sufficiency. Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember Jean-Pierre were joined by Wyandanch SNUG Project Coordinator Debra Sterling, as well as Adrian Fassett, CEO of the Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, which administers the SNUG program. In the 2018-19 Budget, the Assembly secured \$100,000 in funding for the program.

Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember Jean-Pierre also visited COTA, where they were joined by Suffolk County Deputy Police Commissioner and COTA Founder Risco Mention-Lewis. COTA helps former prisoners and other at-risk individuals move their lives forward in a positive manner through weekly meetings, connecting members to community resources and service providers, including housing, educational and employment services. COTA aims to help individuals change their mindset and the culture of their communities where drug dealing and gang violence are common problems.

New York State Assembly

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