

NY - CVIP Bill S1049 - February 2021

Testimony by Audrey Sample, Group Leader of Students Demand Action Rochester

My name is Audrey Sample and I am the founder and group lead for Students Demand Action Rochester. I joined the movement to end gun violence as a teenager shortly after my medically fragile sister passed away at home, surrounded by family. In the aftermath of her death from the flu, well meaning friends told me, “there is no worse way to lose a child.” These remarks always struck me as inaccurate, because I know there are families who lose children without a peaceful goodbye.

Grief connects you with everyone who has ever lost someone. I know the hollowness of waking up each morning knowing the person you love most in this world is dead, and yet, I cannot imagine how much more complicated my relationship with grief would be if my sister’s death could have been prevented by greater access to community resources or sensible legislation. I urge you to include S1049 Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Act in the 2022 budget. I have a responsibility to help prevent other young people from knowing this hollowness, and you, as a legislature, do too.

Despite some of the strongest gun laws in the country, which have had a significant impact, New York still struggles with gun violence. In New York on average, 370 people die by firearm homicide, and 1,522 people are wounded by gun assault or shooting by police.¹

We need investment in community-led safety initiatives.² If we want to end gun violence, we need access to resources that are not dependent on a survivor's level of comfort with police. Currently, victims who report to the police receive services at higher rates: from 2000 to 2009, 14 percent of victims who reported to the police received services, while only 4 percent of victims who did not report received services.³ Violence Intervention Programs successfully reduce violence by implementing alternative public safety measures that are locally driven, informed by data, and often don’t require police involvement.

One of the most popular Violence Intervention Program models is Street Outreach, which provides both immediate crisis response services and long-term stabilization support to individuals and communities affected by gun violence. A 2017 evaluation of a street outreach model known as [Cure Violence](#) implemented in the South Bronx found that its street outreach efforts were associated with a 37 percent

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, “EveryStat: New York,” <https://maps.everytownresearch.org/everystat#NewYork>.

² Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, “Community-led Public Safety Strategies,” October 15, 2020, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/community-led-public-safety-strategies/>.

³ Lynn Langton, “Use of Victim Service Agencies by Victims of Serious Violent Crime, 1993-2009,” (Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2011), <https://bit.ly/2T0ulZk>.

decline in gun injuries and a 63 percent decline in shooting victimizations, while a similar neighborhood without such a program did not experience the same rates of reduction.⁴

The Federal Victims of Crime Act funding has been underutilized in supporting gun violence survivors. SB1049 allows New York to address its gun violence epidemic via trauma and community informed programs. We must act now to prevent gun violence: we owe this to New Yorkers, we owe this to survivors.

⁴ Sheyla A. Delgado et al., “The Effects of Cure Violence in the South Bronx and East New York, Brooklyn,” in *Denormalizing Violence* (New York: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Research and Evaluation Center, 2017), <https://johnjayrec.nyc/2017/10/02/cvinsobronxeastny/>.