

# The Connecticut General Assembly



March 11, 2015

## VIOLENCE FREE-ZONE POLICY & LEGISLATIVE FORUM

**State Representative Brandon L. McGee Jr.**, (D-Hartford, Windsor) hosted the Northeast Neighborhood Violence Free Zone (VFZ) Coalition with Hartford Communities that Care, Inc. (HCTC), city officials, revitalization groups and several other committed organizations to discuss urban violence policy initiatives at the Legislative Office Building on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

“The opportunity to make positive changes in neighborhoods prone to violence and support families seeking hope for their children is what brings us together today,” Rep. McGee said to the group.

“During these tough economic times, it’s important for our State leaders to maintain the prevention of violence as a priority,” said Andrew Woods, Executive Director of HCTC. “Thanks to Rep. McGee, today’s forum represented another opportunity for likeminded partners to come together and advocate for our children and families.”

“We are losing young people to violence and families then flee those neighborhoods”, said McGee. “All of us are committed to the common goal of stopping the cycle of violence and revitalizing urban neighborhoods for the future.”

“We need groups like the Northeast Neighborhood Violence Free Zone that are finding workable and innovative solutions to transform violent neighborhoods into safe and thriving communities. This organization recognizes that even the most violent neighborhoods have the potential to achieve peace with the proper support and programs for our struggling youth,” said State Rep. Douglas McCrory (D-Hartford).

“The YMCA is pleased to be a part of this important community collaboration,” said Clinton D. Hamilton, Executive Director, Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth & Family Center. “It provides all of us with an opportunity to work in partnership, to create a safe and healthy community for all children and families, while increasing our collective impact and opportunity for positive social change.”

In 2013, intervention program funding was allocated in the state budget to focus on helping to curb youth violence through new programs aimed at reducing the number of young people entering the juvenile justice system.

“As a partner of Hartford’s Northeast Neighborhood Violence Free Zone coalition, I affirm that this is a needed entity to combat violence among our youth, but it cannot be accomplished with pats on the back and well-wishers,” said Patricia E. Kelly, President/CEO, Ebony Horsewomen Inc. “We need funds to continue our work not only to address violence in our communities but to attack the systemic causes of violence.”

Hartford’s Northeast Neighborhood Violence Free Zone coalition includes community service organizations that provide, gang intervention, mental health support, professional development, after school programs and neighborhood safety groups that will also work to improve school and police partnerships.

*Brandon L. McGee Jr., represents the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District consisting of a part of Hartford and Windsor. McGee is an Assistant House Majority Leader, Vice-chair of the Human Services Committee, and a member of the Education and labor & Public Employees Committees.*

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