

Kiara Polanco
90-19 88th Ave
Woodhaven, NY 11421
Polancokiara08@gmail.com
March 5, 2023

District 15 Representative Ritchie Torres
540 E Fordham Rd.
Unit 2A
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 503-9610

Dear Representative Ritchie Torres,

Please accept this brief letter commending your advocacy in helping the Bronx Residents feel safer in their communities. I am currently a Master of Social Work Student at Alliance University who is interested in Gun violence Prevention Programs to keep our neighborhoods throughout New York City safe. Thank you for advocating for more funding to wipe out gangs and help victims like Lesandro Guzman's family. Thank you for supporting the Bills to prevent Gangs in our communities. Bill S2410A establishes the "Criminal Street Gang Enforcement and Prevention Act" to improve gang prosecution and prevent gang recruitment via proactive community engagement. Bill S6211, presently in the Senate, makes it a Class D felony charge to seek, recruit, or encourage another individual to join or stay a member of a criminal street gang. These new legislations can ensure that each community is safeguarded from criminal activities and that members understand that such behavior will not be permitted and that they will be prosecuted. I recently came across a publication on the internet where you spoke about your life experiences growing up. I feel that is super important to relate to the communities you service especially governing from a place you experienced. Thank you for being in favor of banning assault rifles and for advocating for the new legislation for people under the age of 21 to undergo a background check. The access to guns in our communities create an unsafe environment for all mentally and physically. We should be able to walk freely with our children and not worry about gun violence and how easily it is accessible for our children. Black males ages 15-34 are twenty times more likely to be a victim of homicide than their white peers. This stands out in the Borough because majority of our young men are African American or Hispanic. I urge you to continue advocating for our culture and creating more activities for young men to be involved in whether it is through sports or a support group that way they are occupied on bettering their future instead of resorting to gun violence. Thank you again for your continued advocacy for residents in your community, and we encourage you to continue this momentum into providing a safer place for the Bronx Residents.

Sincerely,
Kiara Polanco
MSW Student at Alliance University