



# HARVARD BLACK STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

www.harvardbsa.com

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Contact: Malcolm Rivers, Political Action Chair

Tel. 617.529.4462

Email: [mrivers@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:mrivers@fas.harvard.edu)

## STATEMENT REGARDING YOUTH VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS

**By Malcolm Rivers**  
**Political Action Chair, Harvard Black Students Association**  
**Harvard College Class of 2009**

We are here today in solidarity with the thousands of young black people in this city who are forced to live in conditions of virtual terror. Governor Patrick, we ask you this question: why are the streets of some major cities in a third world country safer than those of the capital city of one of the richest states in the most powerful country on earth? We're here today to issue a challenge to the Governor: to produce a comprehensive strategy for combating the escalating youth and gang violence on the streets of inner cities throughout the commonwealth. We're also calling on black students and other students of goodwill to build a new student movement to reduce black on black violence in our poorest communities. We call upon the black academic intelligentsia to step up and bring your considerable resources to bear on this pressing social problem.

I speak as one who knows firsthand of the terror that plagues too many of the streets of this commonwealth. In December 2005, I lost three friends to gun violence in a quadruple homicide. The murders occurred in the house next door, in my friend's basement. I've seen the horror of this violence up close and would like invite Governor Patrick to take this opportunity to save other young black people from such a terrible burden. Governor Patrick you promised to practice a new form of politics. It was supposed to be different than business as usual. As too much blood is shed on the streets of this commonwealth, it is now time for you to show and prove.