



# HARVARD BLACK STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

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**NEWS RELEASE  
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## **HARVARD BLACK STUDENTS CHALLENGE GOVERNOR ON BLACK-ON-BLACK YOUTH VIOLENCE**

Black Students Association Calls for Comprehensive Strategy

Cambridge, Massachusetts—The Harvard Black Students Association (BSA) is publicly confronting Governor Deval Patrick and his leadership team over their failure to adequately address youth violence in the city of Boston and surrounding areas. Accusing Patrick of ignoring the destruction occurring in Boston's most underprivileged and underserved communities, members of the Black Students Association are beginning to petition for a change in the governor's short-sighted and ill-conceived, reactionary approach to crime and violence in these majority black and Latino neighborhoods.

In an open letter written to Governor Patrick on behalf of the organization, Sarah Lockridge-Steckel, BSA President, charges Patrick with ignoring the communities suffering from failed government services, a substandard education system, and unanswered calls for help. The students find Patrick's continued praise of Massachusetts's renowned universities, hospitals and research facilities hypocritical in contrast to the state's ineffectiveness at addressing youth violence. "Governor's Patrick's focus on technological innovation and economic progress are irrelevant if a large segment of the population is not alive to see it," stated Lockridge-Steckel.

Citing Patrick's reluctance to move forward with previously proposed anti-crime legislation, black students at Harvard are forced to question if safeguarding the lives and communities of underprivileged youth is a priority of Patrick's at all. The students, some from inner-city Boston themselves, are joining neighborhoods and constituents across the city advocating for Patrick to end his silence, open his eyes, and begin to protect the lives of children and young adults from threats of violence that negatively impact their lives and their futures.

Lockridge-Steckel, on behalf of the Black Students Association and the black community at Harvard, called on Governor Patrick to give an address in December presenting his strategy for measurably reducing black-on-black violence in the Commonwealth. "This is about holding the Governor accountable for protecting the children of Massachusetts," Lockridge-Steckel explained. The organization hopes swift and effective change will come to Boston's neighborhoods most in need. It remains to be seen whether the Governor will finally address these issues or if their protests have once again fallen on deaf ears.

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