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Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs (D-Flatbush) joined Assemblymembers Michelle Schimel, Karim Camara, Brian Kavanagh, community activists and others this past Tuesday to take a stand against gun violence in New York City. The event in Crown Heights, Brooklyn took place in front of the “Piece Out/Peace In” gun prevention mural and drew legislators from across New York City. Those in attendance repeated a common theme: gun violence in our communities must be stopped and the gun lobby’s influence on legislation must end.

“I’m standing here with Ed Powell, President of the 70th Precinct Community Council, [who] gets called in every time another tragedy happens,” Assemblywoman Jacobs started. “We are confronted with a cynical response on the part of some legislators who are persuaded by the gun lobby, which let’s face it, are merchants of death,” Ms. Jacobs told the crowd.

Ms. Jacobs and her fellow lawmakers in attendance expressed their deep concern that a New York State Senate bill to create a “stand your ground” law in New York could become a reality because of the influence of the gun lobby in Albany. The bill would create a law similar to the controversial Florida law that has captured the country’s attention following the Trayvon Martin shooting.

Assemblywoman Jacobs also expressed her support for Assemblywoman Schimel’s legislation that would require all licensed semiautomatic pistols to be “microstamped” with a “unique, alpha-numeric or geometric code” for identification purposes. “The City of New York has done a good job trying to control gun trafficking, but it’s not enough,” said Jacobs.

“The package of legislation we have is really urgent,” Jacobs added, referring to the bill proposed by Schimel along with a bill introduced by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh to mandate background checks for employees of licensed firearm businesses.

Ms. Jacobs also stressed the importance of positive relationships between elected officials, community groups and law enforcement. “Legislation on the state level is so important,” Jacobs said, but she emphasized that “we can’t do it alone.”