

# Former High Ranking Member of the Gangster Disciples, Harold “Noonie G” Ward Addresses Rick Ross, Political Pandering and Real Motives in Open Letter to Senator Mark Kirk



Senator Mark Kirk's Call to Incarcerate 18,000 Gangster Disciples

Suggests that he is Out of Touch with Inner-City Issues

By former high ranking member of the Gangster Disciples, Harold “Noonie G” Ward

Chicago, IL – Rather than sit down with community leaders to develop a strategy to educate, mentor and employ at-risk youth, Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) recently came up with the idea to spend \$30 million to arrest and jail 18,000 Gangster Disciples (GD) in an effort to alleviate the rampant violence in Chicago.

According a Chicago magazine article, Senator Kirk said, “My top priority is to arrest the Gangster Disciple gang, which is 18,000 people. I would like a mass pickup of them and put them all in the Thomson Correctional Facility.”

The full insanity of this assertion has already been addressed in the media, but as a former high ranking member of the GD's, who is haunted every second by the escalating tragedy and violence in Chicago, I am compelled to speak. It doesn't take

a genius to figure out that targeting and arresting one gang will not squash the many random acts of violence that are emanating from numerous sources.

Furthermore, Chicagoland is riddled with numerous gangs, and by far, the GD's are not the most notorious. Interestingly though, a few months ago, they were rumored to have caused the cancellation of rapper Rick Ross' multi-city tour. Not only does Rick Ross reinforce and instigate the madness in these streets with his lyrics and drug dealing bravado, he also makes millions for the corporate powers behind him. A tour cancellation can hit deep, far beyond the pockets of the mere rap act involved.

Senator Kirk, an inquiring mind might wonder if the targeting of one isolated gang, as opposed to the several that run rampant in these city streets, might be a political move that finds you pandering for financial favor from select entertainment industry elite versus any genuine concern for the welfare of your inner-city constituents.

Let's keep this real, violence doesn't just stem from just gangs. Violence is a product of frustration, lack of educational resources, unemployment, financial instability, and most of all fear.

Aren't there more productive ways to spend \$30 million? With a reported 2.7 million Chicago children parentless due to incarceration, how could a blind street sweep targeting one gang benefit the community? Mass incarceration contributes to the destruction of Black and Brown communities instead of building them up.

Where is the call for legislation to implement jobs for youth, build youth centers, facilitate after school programs and create and stimulate income for the parents of these youth? Where is the real concern to analyze the real conditions that have created an environment where over 40 people can be shot

in one weekend and the senseless killing of babies and kids is a daily occurrence?

Senator Kirk, perhaps you missed the 2010 report from Illinois Department of Corrections saying the state's prison system is at 150% of capacity; or the fact that the state spent \$140 million to build the Thomson Correctional Center you speak of, but couldn't open because they forgot to allow for the 50 million in annual operating costs. Maybe if some of those millions were spent on education and summer jobs, less young people would be lost to the gangs.

Instead of dumping 18,000 'faceless' individuals into an overcrowded and dangerous prison system, Senator Kirk, my challenge is for you to sit down with grassroots community leaders to talk about a solution from the bottom up. As a true street soldier, I carry not only love and understanding for my former affiliates, but love and understanding for an entire community that is dangerously under siege right now. I invite you Senator Kirk, to come sit down and strategize to come up with some genuine solutions to these very real dilemmas.

Yes, I am a former member of the very gang you plan to target, the Gangster Disciples. But, thanks to education and mentoring, I've walked and worked with President Barack Obama as an activist in Altgeld Gardens where I grew up, organized Chicago's first National Gang Summit for Peace, and even ran for political office.

Headlines like arresting 18,000 gang members may make for great media, but how about putting forth a real effort to create great communities to live, grow and prosper in? Instead of arresting people, how about arresting frustration, lacking educational resources, joblessness, hunger, financial instability and fear?

Yeah, how about that Senator Kirk? I'm down if you are.

Harold "Noonie G" Ward is the author of the book and DVD

“Gangster with a Heart of Gold: The Noonie G Story” narrated by Chicago natives Grammy Award winner Kanye West and celebrated hip hop artist and actor Common. Twitter: @TheRealNoonieG Facebook: The-Real-Noonie-G.