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COMBATING YOUTH VIOLENCE: WHAT FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING TO DETER YOUTH CRIME

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on October 3, 2006	1
Statement of:	
Jackson, Rev. Jesse	91
Loosle, Robert B., Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Division, Los Angeles FBI; and John A. Torres, Special Agent in Charge, LA Field Division, ATF	9
Loosle, Robert B.	9
Torres, John A.	19
Trejo, Danny, film actor and former gang member; Chief Ronnie Williams, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; Jerald Cavitt, former gang member; Captain Regina Scott, patrol commanding officer, Southwest Division, Los Angeles Police Department; Charlotte Jordan, CEO, Mothers on the March; Dan Isaacs, chief operating officer, Los Angeles Unified School District; Eddie Jones, president, Los Angeles Civil Rights Association; and Rev. Dr. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., senior pastor at Bryant Temple AME Church, board member of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention	35
Cavitt, Jerald	49
Isaacs, Dan	69
Jones, Eddie	78
Jordan, Charlotte	62
Oden, Rev. Dr. Clyde W., Jr.,	81
Scott, Captain Regina	54
Trejo, Danny	35
Williams, Chief Ronnie	37
Letters, statements, etc., submitted for the record by:	
Baca, Leroy D., sheriff, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, prepared statement of	40
Cavitt, Jerald, former gang member, prepared statement of	51
Isaacs, Dan, chief operating officer, Los Angeles Unified School District, prepared statement of	72
Jones, Eddie, president, Los Angeles Civil Rights Association, prepared statement of	80
Jordan, Charlotte, CEO, Mothers on the March, prepared statement of	63
Loosle, Robert B., Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Division, Los Angeles FBI, prepared statement of	11
Oden, Rev. Dr. Clyde W., Jr., senior pastor at Bryant Temple AME Church, board member of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention, prepared statement of	83
Scott, Captain Regina, patrol commanding officer, Southwest Division, Los Angeles Police Department, prepared statement of	57
Souder, Hon. Mark E., a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana, prepared statement of	4
Torres, John A., Special Agent in Charge, LA Field Division, ATF, prepared statement of	21

COMBATING YOUTH VIOLENCE: WHAT FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING TO DETER YOUTH CRIME

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY,
AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Los Angeles, CA.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in the F.A.M.E. Renaissance Center, 1968 West Adams Boulevard, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA, Hon. Mark E. Souder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Souder and Watson.

Staff present: Marc Wheat, staff director; Dennis Kilcoyne and Jim Kaiser, professional staff members and counsels; Scott Springer and Mark Fedor, congressional fellows; Kimberly Craswell, clerk; Tony Haywood, minority counsel; and Shaun Garrison, minority professional staff member.

Mr. SOUDER. The subcommittee will come to order. Good morning and thank you all for coming. This is actually the second hearing our subcommittee has had this year on the topic of gangs. The first focused on illegal immigrant gangs and was over on the East Coast, while today's hearing focuses on the problem of gangs and youth violence in general and what government, community groups and private citizens should do and are doing to discourage crime and prevent young people from being caught up in the culture of violence and despair.

For many people, where the subject of gangs is raised, particularly in expressions of popular culture, images of Los Angeles streets come to mind. Fair or not, the city and its surrounding communities are at times associated with gangs, particularly the "Bloods" and the "Crips" from the 1970's onward. And as immigration—legal and illegal—swells the numbers of adolescents in this country, the southern California gang picture is becoming more diverse, as violent gangs like Mara Salvatrucha—MS–13—and the Latin Kings take root.

A "gang" has been defined as "a group that forms an allegiance based on various social needs and engages in acts injurious to public health and safety." More broadly speaking, gangs of crime-prone young people are more likely to form in areas that are blighted economically and where healthy community ties of family, school, culture and religion are weak. The need for kinship and belonging

draws young people together where such ties are loose or non-existent, making them vulnerable to pressures to surrender to a culture of selfishness, greed, violence and rampant materialism.

If they do surrender to joining a gang, they are drawn deeper into crimes such as drug dealing and abuse, assaults, robbery, theft, rape and even murder. When individuals fall, law enforcement at all levels of government must step in to cope with the consequences. But the entrance of government at this point is an acknowledgement of failure and by itself can never be a satisfactory response.

Given the nature of the discussion of late on the subject of gangs, many will be surprised to find that the most recent government statistics point—since the mid-90's—to declining levels of crime involving youth. This is so even where numbers of young people are rising, including in poor Hispanic areas. Notable exceptions include a curious and disturbing level of crime by young girls, as well as an increase in the number of children arrested for drug abuse. We are concerned with a seeming recent rise in violent gang activity.

Law enforcement at all levels of government must be assertively and judiciously applied to cope with youth crime in the here and now. That involves investigation, arrest and punishment of crimes that have already occurred, as well as active efforts to dismantle entire gang networks, rather than just picking off individual gang members one at a time.

But law enforcement is no more than a third of any comprehensive anti-gang effort. Any credible strategy to deal with youth crime must also involve intervention and prevention. Law enforcement responds with traditional strategies of investigation, arrest, disruption and prosecution.

But families, churches and community associations must intervene and provide young people a safe and reliable way out of crime and gang ties. The most difficult—and most important—element of an anti-gang strategy is prevention. Stronger families and communities must exist in order to deprive gangs of their oxygen of greed, selfishness, despair and lack of hope.

This hearing will explore the progress of government and private-sector participants in coping with the problems of gangs and youth crime in Los Angeles, and will explore their efforts at preventing the lure of gang culture from taking root in the hearts of vulnerable young people.

We have a very promising group of witnesses with us today. On our first panel, we have Robert Loosle, who is the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Criminal Division here in Los Angeles. He is joined by John Torres, Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

For our second panel, we will hear from Danny Trejo, an accomplished film actor and former gang member; Chief Ronnie Williams of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; former gang member and community activist Jerald Cavitt; Captain Regina Scott, who is the patrol commanding officer of the LAPD's Southwest Division; Charlotte Jordan, who is the CEO of Mothers on the March; Chief Operating Officer Dan Isaacs of the L.A. Unified School District; Eddie Jones, president of the L.A. Civil Rights Association; and the Reverend Dr. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., who is senior pastor at Bryant Tem-

ple A.M.E. Church and board member of the African-American Summit on Violence Prevention. Thank you all for coming, and we are looking forward to your testimony.

Now I yield for an opening statement to our host and good friend, Congresswoman Watson.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Mark E. Souder follows:]

Opening Statement
Chairman Mark Souder

"Combating Youth Violence: What Federal, State and Local Governments are doing to Combat Youth Crime"

Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform

October 3, 2006

Good morning and thank you all for coming. This is actually the second hearing our subcommittee has had this year on the topic of gangs. The first focused on illegal immigrant gangs, while today's hearing focuses on the problem of gangs and youth violence in general and what government, community groups and private citizens should do and are doing to discourage crime and prevent young people from being caught up in the culture of violence and despair.

For many people, where the subject of gangs is raised, particularly in expressions of popular culture, images of Los Angeles streets come to mind. Fair or not, the city and its surrounding communities are at times associated with gangs, particularly the "Bloods" and the "Crips" from the 70s onward. And as immigration—legal and illegal—swells the numbers of adolescents in this country, the southern California gang picture is becoming more diverse, as violent gangs like *Mara Salvatrucha* (MS-13) and the Latin Kings take root.

A "gang" has been defined as "a group that forms an allegiance based on various social needs and engages in acts injurious to public health and safety." More broadly speaking, gangs of crime-prone young people are more likely to form in areas that are blighted economically and where healthy community ties of family, school, culture and religion are weak. The need for kinship and belonging draws young people together where such ties are loose or non-existent, making them vulnerable to pressures to surrender to a culture of selfishness, greed, violence and rampant materialism.

Once they do surrender, they are drawn deeper into crimes such as drug dealing and abuse, assaults, robbery, theft, rape and even murder. When families and communities fail to nurture and guide young people towards responsible citizenship and healthy adulthood, law enforcement at all levels of government must step in to cope with the consequences. But the entrance of government at this point is an acknowledgement of failure and by itself can never be a satisfactory response.

Given the nature of the discussion of late on the subject of gangs, many will be surprised to find that the most recent government statistics point—since the mid-90s—to

declining levels of crime involving youth. This is so even where numbers of young people are rising, including in poor Hispanic areas. Notable exceptions include a curious and disturbing level of crime by young girls, as well as an increase in the number of children arrested for drug abuse.

Law enforcement at all levels of government must be assertively and judiciously applied to cope with youth crime in the here and now. That involves investigation, arrest and punishment of crimes that have already occurred, as well as active efforts to dismantle entire gang networks, rather than just picking off individual gang members one at a time.

But law enforcement is no more than a third of any comprehensive anti-gang effort. Any credible strategy to deal with youth crime must also involve intervention and prevention. Law enforcement responds with traditional strategies of investigation, arrest, disruption and prosecution. But families, churches and community associations must intervene and provide young people a safe and reliable way out of crime and gang ties. The most difficult—and most important—element of an anti-gang strategy is prevention. Stronger families and communities must exist in order to deprive gangs of their oxygen of greed, selfishness, despair and lack of hope.

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For our second panel, we will hear from Danny Trejo, an accomplished film actor and former gang member who has intervened in the lives of many young people who have been harmed by gang culture; Chief Ronnie Williams of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; former gang member and community activist Jerald Cavitt, a gang intervention specialist who—like Mr. Trejo—has touched the lives of many people harmed by gang activity; Captain Regina Scott, who is the Patrol Commanding Officer of the LAPD's Southwest Division; Charlotte Jordan, who is the C.E.O. of Mothers on the March; Chief Operating Officer Dan Isaacs of the L.A. Unified School District; Eddie Jones, President of the L.A. Civil Rights Association; and the Reverend Dr. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., who is Senior Pastor at Bryant Temple A.M.E. Church and board member of the African-American Summit on Violence Prevention. Thank you all for coming, and we are looking forward to your testimony.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, I want to personally thank you for convening this subcommittee hearing in my congressional district. You are in the heart of the district now and as far north as you can see is the 33rd Congressional District. You can locate its boundary lines by seeing that Hollywood sign. We go over to the ocean. We go around the boundaries of Culver City. Then we go all the way over to Glendale and through Griffith Park.

I even go up into Ferndale. I have all two houses up there. And I go down and take in USC and go all the way down to where old Pepperdine was. You are right in the heart of the 33rd District and you are going to find that there is a lot of information you can glean from people who know this community and this city well. It is an honor and a privilege to bring Capitol Hill to Los Angeles so not only my constituents but those across the Nation can see the ongoing problems in our communities stemming from youth violence.

It is also an honor to have this outstanding and knowledgeable panel of Federal, State, and local witnesses here to discuss from the horse's mouth, if we want to say that, what is occurring on a daily basis in our neighborhoods of Los Angeles and find out what Congress can do to make our citizens feel safe in them.

I would also like to thank F.A.M.E. Renaissance, the building that we are in now, for their support in helping coordinate this event and their continued support and uplifting they give the city of Los Angeles and beyond. Violence in American society has reached pandemic levels. Los Angeles has for many years suffered from serious levels of youth as well as gang violence.

While many experts on youth violence believe there are encouraging signs that youth violence, at least when you look at the statistics, is on the decline, everyone in this room knows that youth violence in general directly impacts our quality of life.

Let me briefly cite some statistics on youth violence that underscore and dramatize the nature of the beast we are dealing with. Of the estimated 23 million youth in the United States age 12 to 17, the national household survey on drug abuse showed that more than 5 million of those youth reported participating in serious fighting at school or work and almost 4 million took part in a group against group fight.

In a single year in California nearly 6,000 young people are hospitalized for some form of violent injury including assault, child abuse, domestic violence, and rape. In Los Angeles County alone, between 1981 and 1992, 15,000 people died of AIDS but 22,000 died as a result of homicides.

In Los Angeles County, the use of semi-automatic handguns in gang-related killings has more than quadrupled to more than 40 percent. These statistics are indeed startling. What is even more scary is the fact that school, a place where kids are supposed to learn how to become better contributors to society, is no longer a safe haven. Murders and crimes have haunted many schools in areas around the Nation.

Crenshaw and Jefferson High School in my congressional district have been and have seen death and violence at a rapid pace in 2006 alone. Just today you are hearing what happened back in Pennsylvania in an Amish community detached from the regular

world. To think someone can come in and kill innocent children boggles the mind.

We can see by what occurred yesterday how violence can occur in an academic setting where no one expected it. When you look at the Amish school and the fact that these youth don't even watch television, they don't listen to radios, they don't go to the movies, and they could be visited by that violence, we have a problem. The culture of youth and gang violence must stop.

Our panelists today, along with Congress, should be working together to find solutions that endure and that ensure that effective resources to deter youth violence are working and those programs are made available to all youth caught up in this epidemic of violence and crime. The key to preventing or stemming the increase of youth violence is to understand where and when it occurs, what causes it, and what strategies for prevention and intervention are most effective.

In the not too distant future, the very youth we are discussing we hope will be business leaders, employees, parents, civic and community leaders. Our children indeed are the future of our Nation and we must continue to teach them well by example that violence solves nothing and good communities work together, not against one another.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you again for holding the hearing and I would like to thank our witnesses for taking the time out of their very busy schedules to show the United States how violence has affected Los Angeles and what we are going to do together to address this problem. I yield back and thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you very much. Maybe I will take just a couple minutes to explain a little bit the format of a congressional hearing and what our subcommittee is. There are basically three types of committees in Congress. An authorizing committee defines, for example, in No Child Left Behind, what education policy should be.

The Appropriations Committee then funds what the authorizing committee would say the most you could spend in that and basic policies. The Appropriations Committee funds it. Government reform and oversight, which is the part of Congress that this committee is part of and this subcommittee, then sees that the executive branch is implementing the policies as intended, that the moneys that went to State and local are being implemented as intended to look at what things are being done that are positive to start in the oversight another process that then goes back to the authorizing committee and starts the process over.

For example, on gangs the authorizing committee would be the Judiciary Committee, Appropriations would fund it. Our committee has oversight over criminal justice and all things related, so we would do oversight on gangs and then take the findings that we have at a hearing like this and kick them back to the authorizing committee. All Members of Congress sit on all types of committees. That sounded nice and pure.

In fact, we are an authorizing subcommittee on narcotics as well as broader. This particular subcommittee has wide jurisdiction for a number of reasons, partly because we deal with narcotics and terrorism, but we also have oversight over the Department of Edu-

cation, the Department of Health and Human Resources, any program in the Department of Justice, anything anywhere to do with narcotics and with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, partly because when we got into justice policy and into narcotics policy, we realized that we needed to look at all the agencies and what they are doing relative to that.

In the way it has evolved in Congress, our subcommittee spends about 50 percent of our time on narcotics because we are the primary committee for authorizing oversight on narcotics. Clearly, when you get into subjects of youth violence, of gangs, of all this type of thing, you are going to get into the narcotics question as well.

Now an official congressional hearing is chaired by the majority party. I am a conservative Republican from Indiana. Contrary to popular suspicion, we don't all claw each other's eyes out all the time. In fact, we have an excellent working relationship. Generally speaking, we agree on a lot of the problems. Sometimes we have differences on the solutions.

I don't want to hurt Congressman Watson by implying she agrees with everything but, at the same time, she has been a very active member of our committee and has been an active leader and advocate for Los Angeles for those who are often dispossessed in the political system. I appreciate her leadership and that is why I am here even though I have an election in Indiana right now. This issue has been increasing in pressure.

One other thing: you'll see our witnesses are each given 5 minutes and then we do questions to them. This is not a participatory event. If anybody wants to submit statements afterwards, you can either go to the committee or Congressman Watson. We are the only committee that directly does swearing in of the witnesses that you will see today. Probably the most—well, we did lots of investigations on Bureaucracy. We do it all the time on a wide variety of subjects. Probably the most well known in this past year was the steroids investigation.

Mr. Loosle, you are sitting where Jose Conseco sat on that side. Mark McGuire was roughly where you are, Mr. Torres, when he said that he didn't want to talk about the past. Today we are here hoping you will talk about the past and discuss it because we can't learn how to correct things if we don't, in fact, talk about the past.

I wanted to do just a little outline. The results of today will go through a period of checking for grammatical errors and getting additional questions, because we will supply probably a number of questions to the different people involved and others who weren't here today. Then it gets published in a form of a book about 6 months later so this becomes part of the permanent record of the U.S. Congress and the Library of Congress. Anybody who wants to do gang research will be able to come back to today's hearing.

With that background, I have two procedural matters. Before we hear testimony we need to take care of some procedural matters. First I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to submit written statements and questions for the hearing record; that any answers to written questions provided by the witnesses also be included in the record. Without objection it is so ordered.

Second, I ask unanimous consent that all exhibits, documents, and other materials referred to by witnesses and Members be included in the hearing record and that all Members be permitted to revise and extend their remarks. Without objection it is so ordered.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent that all Members present be permitted to participate in the hearing. Without objection it is so ordered.

What that says, by the way, is all witnesses will have their full statement put in the record automatically and any information that you want additional to provide.

As I mentioned, it is the rule of this subcommittee to swear in all their witnesses so, Mr. Loosle and Mr. Torres, if you will stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SOUDER. Let the record show that both the witnesses responded in the affirmative. We thank you very much for coming, and now be recognized for your opening statements.

STATEMENTS OF ROBERT B. LOOSLE, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE, CRIMINAL DIVISION, LOS ANGELES FBI; AND JOHN A. TORRES, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE, LA FIELD DIVISION, ATF

STATEMENT OF ROBERT B. LOOSLE

Mr. LOOSLE. Good morning Chairman Souder and Ranking Member Watson. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today about combatting violent gangs in Los Angeles. I want to thank you again for providing me the opportunity to appear before you and speak on the issue of violent gangs in Los Angeles. Los Angeles has long been recognized as the epicenter of gang activity nationwide.

Recent estimates place approximately 1,350 street gangs with as many as 175,000 members in Los Angeles area. In addition, many gangs which today have a nationwide presence, such as the Bloods, the Crips, Mara Salvatrucha—MS–13—and 18th Street, can trace their roots to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, street gangs comprise the primary violent crime challenge to the area's law enforcement agencies. Although law enforcement has been effective in reducing the criminal threat posed by gangs in the Los Angeles area, recruitment efforts by gang members have continued in recent years. Local neighborhoods, prisons, the Internet, and schools have been targeted as "hot-spots" for gang recruitment.

In an effort to address the violent gangs in Los Angeles, the FBI's Los Angeles Division, in conjunction with a number of Federal agencies, State and local partners, realized early on the need to attack the problem as a unified force. In the wake of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, the FBI formed the Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force on Violent Crime [LAMTFVC], a nationally known Safe Streets Task Force.

The FBI has also established a National Gang Strategy to identify the gangs posing the greatest danger to American communities. Targeting gangs identified within the National Gang Strategy, the FBI is utilizing the same statutes and investigative tech-

niques that have been traditionally used against organized crime groups.

Some of the gangs being addressed under the National Gang Strategy in the Los Angeles area are the Bloods, the Crips, MS–13, 18th Street, and the Mexican Mafia—EME. The gangs targeted by the Los Angeles FBI have gained notoriety for their extreme level of violence, their flexibility, their high-level of organization, and their willingness to participate in a wide variety of criminal activities.

Although the level of sophistication in their criminal activities may vary, these gangs remain consistently violent. These gangs are primarily engaged in retail drug trafficking, specifically involving powder cocaine, rock cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana. These gangs are also involved in a variety of other types of criminal activity, including murder, assault, extortion, robbery and, for the Hispanic gangs, alien smuggling.

On September 12, 2006, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force on Violent Crime executed 15 search and arrest warrants upon individuals associated with the 18th Street gang and the Mexican Mafia. In fact, Federal search and arrest warrants were executed at two residences associated with a "shot caller" of this organization within blocks of the location where we sit today, located at 2630 South Harvard and 3016 South Dalton, both of which are located within three blocks east and south of this center.

Although I have spent considerable time discussing the significance of gang violence and gang influence in Los Angeles, I would be remiss if I did not suggest that more could be done. If we are going to win this battle, we need to be more proactive in preventing our youth from engaging in gang activity, and rehabilitating those who choose to leave. I would like to suggest a three pronged approach to achieving this goal: prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation.

Prevention: First and foremost we must prevent future generations of youth from falling into the entrapments of gang culture. As law enforcement officers, we must work closely with community, schools, and churches to find ways to dissuade our youth from joining gangs. We must show them gangs are not a glamorous or attractive lifestyle and definitely not an educational or vocational alternative.

Intervention: We must work together, with local, State, Federal, and international law enforcement to identify and target the most violent gangs, and then we must focus on disrupting their activities and dismantling their infrastructure.

Rehabilitation: We must ensure there are programs in place to rehabilitate those who seek to change their ways. We, as law enforcement, need to work with these groups to ensure a successful and enduring change in these individuals.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and share the work the FBI is doing and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you very much.

Mr. Torres.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Loosle follows:]

Testimony of Robert B. Loosle
Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Division, Los Angeles Field Office
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Before:
House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Los Angeles, CA
Tuesday, October 3, 2006

Good morning Chairman Souder and Ranking Member Watson. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today about the FBI's efforts in Los Angeles to combat violent street gangs.

Gangs and other criminal enterprises, operating in the U.S. and throughout the world, pose increasing concerns for the international law enforcement and intelligence communities. Today, gangs are more violent, more organized and more widespread than ever before. They pose one of the greatest threats to the safety and security of all Americans. The Department of Justice estimates there are approximately 30,000 gangs, with 800,000 members, impacting 2,500 communities across the United States. The innocent people of these communities face daily exposure to violence from criminal gangs trafficking in drugs and weapons, and gangs fighting amongst themselves to control or extend their turf and their various criminal enterprises.

Los Angeles has long been recognized as the epicenter of gang activity nation wide. Recent estimates indicate approximately 1,350 street gangs, with as many as 175,000 members in the FBI Los Angeles' seven county area of responsibility (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange). In addition, many gangs which

today have a nationwide presence, such as the Bloods, the Crips, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), and 18th Street, can trace their roots to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, street gangs comprise the primary violent crime challenge to the area's law enforcement agencies. Although law enforcement has been effective in reducing the criminal threat posed by gangs in the Los Angeles area, recruitment efforts by gang members have continued in recent years. Local neighborhoods, prisons, the Internet, and schools have been targeted as "hot-spots" for gang recruitment. The increasing use of local schools to recruit new members is of concern and could increase violence in schools as youths are initiated into gangs and see rival gang members at their school on a daily basis. In addition to recruitment, the process wherein gangs maintain and expand their territory often entails violence such as drive-by shootings and gang-related homicides.

In an effort to address the violent gang problem in the Los Angeles arena, the FBI's Los Angeles Division, in conjunction with its various federal, state, and local partners, realized early on the need to attack the problem as a unified force. In the wake of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, the FBI formed the Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force on Violent Crime (LAMTFVC), a nationally known Safe Streets Task Force. The mission of the LAMTFVC is to identify and target for prosecution the most criminally active and violent individuals and enterprises impacting the greater Los Angeles area. Currently, there are seven separate Safe Streets Task Forces composed of agents and officers from sixteen local, state and federal agencies operating within the Los Angeles Division. These task forces bring significant resources to bear upon the gang problem within the Los Angeles area. Since 2004, the FBI in the Los Angeles Field Office has been a participating member of the MS-13 National Gang Task Force. This task force

consists of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and targets the emerging threat posed by MS-13 nationwide.

To address the threat posed by gangs on a local, regional, national and even international level, the FBI has established a National Gang Strategy to identify the gangs posing the greatest danger to American communities. Targeting gangs identified within the National Gang Strategy, the FBI is utilizing the same statutes and investigative techniques that have been traditionally used against organized crime groups, such as Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) and Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering (VICAR) prosecutions. Some of the gangs being addressed under the National Gang Strategy in the Los Angeles area are the Bloods, the Crips, MS-13, 18th Street, and the Mexican Mafia (EME).

The FBI has played a leading role in addressing the gang problem nationwide. In response to the growing threat from gangs, the FBI has raised the priority of gang intelligence and strengthened investigative efforts by increasing the number of agents assigned to Safe Streets Task Forces. Additionally, the FBI has established a National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) to coordinate and share intelligence regarding the activities of violent gangs. The NGIC enables the FBI and its local, state and federal partners to centralize and coordinate the national collection of intelligence on gangs in the United States and then analyze, share and disseminate this intelligence with law enforcement authorities throughout the country. The NGIC provides local, state and federal investigators and intelligence analysts the opportunity and mechanism to share their collective information and intelligence on gangs. This enables gang investigators and analysts to identify links between gangs and gang investigations, to further identify gangs and gang members, to learn the full scope of their criminal activities and enterprises, to determine

which gangs pose the greatest threat to the United States, to identify trends in gang activity and migration, and to guide them in coordinating their investigations and prosecutions to disrupt and dismantle gangs. The NGIC has become an essential part of the FBI's effort to combat and dismantle gangs, and will enhance the existing liaison and coordination efforts of federal, state and local agencies.

In addition to the NGIC, the Department of Justice has created a new national gang task force, called the National Gang Targeting, Enforcement and Coordination Center (GangTECC). GangTECC is led by the Department's Criminal Division, and is comprised of representatives from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Bureau of Prisons, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Marshals Service, and the U.S.Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security, among others. The center coordinates overlapping investigations, ensures that tactical and strategic intelligence is shared between law enforcement agencies, and serves as a central coordinating center for multi-jurisdictional gang investigations involving Federal law enforcement agencies. GangTECC works hand-in-hand with the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC), described above.

Most recently the Attorney General unveiled on February 15, 2006 his plan to combat gangs in America. One aspect of that plan includes a Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative implemented in Los Angeles and five other sites across the country. Each site is receiving $ 2.5 million in state and local grants to incorporate prevention, enforcement and re-entry efforts to address gang membership and gang violence at every stage.

With respect to our immediate area of responsibility, the Los Angeles Division of the FBI aggressively targets a wide range of criminal street gangs, including the Bloods and Crips, MS-13 and 18th Street, and the Mexican Mafia (EME). The gangs targeted by the Los Angeles FBI have gained notoriety for their extreme level of violence, their flexibility, their high-level of organization, and their willingness to participate in a wide variety of criminal activities. Although the level of sophistication in their criminal activities may vary, these gangs remain consistently violent. Gangs in Los Angeles are often divided into subsets, or cliques, usually defined by neighborhood boundaries. Each clique has a local leader referred to as a "shot-caller" who is responsible for coordinating the criminal activities of the clique as well as issuing sanctions for violations of the gang's code. These gangs are primarily engaged in retail drug trafficking, specifically involving powder cocaine, rock cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana. These gangs are also involved in a variety of other types of criminal activity, including murder, assault, extortion, robbery and, for the Hispanic gangs, alien smuggling. Furthermore, the Mexican Mafia, a powerful gang based largely in the state and federal prison system, is coordinating the criminal activities of certain cliques in the Los Angeles area. Moreover, the migration of gang members from Los Angeles to other regions of the United States has led to a rapid proliferation of these gangs in many smaller suburban and rural areas not accustomed to gang activity and its related crimes.

One very recent example of the steps being taken by the Los Angeles Division of the FBI to combat gang violence is the indictment of eighteen members and associates of the 18th Street gang and the Mexican Mafia on racketeering (RICO), narcotics and firearms charges, which was unsealed on September 12, 2006. In conjunction with the unsealing of this indictment, the task

force executed fifteen search and arrest warrants upon individuals charged in the indictment throughout the Los Angeles area. In fact, federal search and arrest warrants were executed at two residences associated with a "shot caller" of this organization within blocks of the location where we sit today.

As I stated earlier, the influence Los Angeles gangs wield has national and international implications. As such, the FBI has endeavored to foster partnerships locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally in order to combat this problem. FBI Los Angeles has been working directly and indirectly with our international law enforcement partners in Mexico and Central America to develop and execute strategies to disrupt and dismantle gang enterprises. It is only through coordinated and cooperative efforts that we will prevail in this mission.

I would like to note the significant contributions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Marshals Service, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the California Department of Corrections, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department in the effort to combat violent gangs. The continued collaborative efforts of these and other agencies are the key to combating gang violence in the Los Angeles area.

Although I have spent considerable time discussing the significance of gang violence and gang influence in Los Angeles, as well as the efforts law enforcement has taken to combat this problem, I would be remiss if I did not suggest that more could be done. If we are going to win this battle, we need to be more proactive in preventing our youth from engaging in gang activity,

and rehabilitating those who choose to leave. I would like to suggest a three pronged approach to achieving this goal--prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation.

Prevention - First and foremost we must prevent future generations of youth from falling into the entrapments of gang culture. As law enforcement officers we must work closely with community, schools and churches to find ways to dissuade our youth from joining gangs. We must show them gangs are not a glamorous or attractive lifestyle and definitely not an educational or vocational alternative. There are many gang prevention programs out there and we need to strengthen these as much as we can.

Intervention - We must work together -- local, state, federal, and international law enforcement -- to identify and target the most violent gangs, and then we must focus on disrupting their activities and dismantling their infrastructure. We need to communicate with each other and share ideas, best practices, and establish a common methodology for combating these groups.

Rehabilitation - We must ensure there are programs in place to rehabilitate those who seek to change their ways. There are many good programs out there. We, as law enforcement, need to work with these groups to ensure a successful and enduring change in these individuals.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and share the work the FBI is doing to address the problem posed by violent gangs in the Los Angeles area. The FBI will continue its efforts, and we will keep this Subcommittee informed of our progress in protecting this nation's citizens against gangs and other criminal enterprises, particularly those with national and international implications. Mr. Chairman and Congresswoman Watson, thank

you for your time and your continued support of the FBI's efforts to combat gangs. I am happy to answer any questions.

STATEMENT OF JOHN A. TORRES

Mr. TORRES. Good morning Chairman Souder and Representative Watson. Thank you for the invitation to testify on behalf of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. I would like to acknowledge our outstanding partnerships with the FBI, the LAPD, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, DEA, U.S. Marshals Service to dismantle gangs and investigate violent crime.

ATF is keenly aware of the nationwide gang problem that plagues our communities. We understand the urgency of reducing gun violence committed by and against youth and we are dedicated to making America safer. ATF initiatives are designed to identify, arrest, and prosecute those offenders responsible for crippling our community and also to deter young people from joining violent gangs.

ATF's core jurisdiction—enforcing laws that prohibit the criminal misuse of firearms and explosives—has placed us at the center of gang investigations involving Los Angeles groups such as the Avenues, Diamond Street, Bloodstone Villians, and Fruit Town Pirus. ATF has unique statutory authority over the "tools of the trade" that make gangs a threat to public safety.

I would like to share with you some brief examples of how ATF gang-enforcement activities are having an impact and making our communities safer. In Los Angeles, ATF conducted an investigation involving Crips gang members trafficking weapons and narcotics. This gang was also involved in armed robberies, homicides and drive-by shootings. To date, 37 individuals have been charged with conspiracy to violate Federal firearms and narcotics laws. As a result of the investigation a total of 19 firearms, cocaine, methamphetamine, and $50,000 in counterfeit currency have been recovered.

Recently, in Northern Virginia, ATF conducted an 18-month undercover investigation where an MS–13 operation was disrupted and dismantled. The investigation resulted in the purchase of over 80 firearms, cocaine, and marijuana. To date, 20 of the defendants have pled guilty or have been found guilty in jury trials. Three of these defendants have been implicated in the murder of an individual who was scheduled to testify against an MS–13 member. One defendant was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment and 2 additional defendants are facing the death penalty.

Chairman Souder, our Fort Wayne, IN, office investigated a firearms trafficking conspiracy consisting of 24 persons in which 156 firearms were purchased utilizing a multitude of straw purchasers from local firearms dealers. The serial numbers were obliterated, and the guns were then delivered to gang members throughout Fort Wayne and Chicago.

Many of these firearms were recovered from notorious Chicago gangs. The firearms recovered had been used in the commission of serious felonies including aggravated assault, robbery, and narcotics trafficking. The two ring leaders were sentenced for ATF violations and served 52 months and 110 months in Federal prison, respectively.

Our efforts to combat gang violence nationally are a major part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods or PSN initiative. PSN is the President's violent crime reduction initiative for the prevention and

prosecution of gun and gang crime. Since the program's inception, ATF has led enforcement efforts by working closely with our State and local partners to investigate gangs and other violent firearms offenders.

In fiscal year 2005, ATF investigations resulted in the conviction of 8,353 defendants on firearms-related charges. In the past 2 years more than 12,000 firearms linked to gang activity have been recovered in crimes, leading to a variety of criminal charges, including CCE and RICO.

The Attorney General describes gang-related violence as the second most critical domestic crime priority behind only the war on terror. Combating violent crime is such a priority for the Attorney General that he has announced a new anti-gang initiative. ATF plays a critical role in these initiatives through our enforcement efforts, and also through our prevention strategies such as the Gang Resistance Education and Training [GREAT] program.

Firearms trafficking, the illegal diversion of firearms out of lawful commerce and into the hands of criminals, is often the method by which gangs and youths arm themselves. By tracing the origins of firearms recovered in crimes, patterns emerge that allow investigators to identify gun traffickers. Since 2000, convictions in ATF trafficking cases have increased by more than 150 percent.

Chairman Souder and Congresswoman Watson, on behalf of the men and women of ATF, I thank you for your time and interest in the work performed by our agency to reduce juvenile crime and gang violence. Historically, we have worked to stop those whose violent and criminal behavior threatens the peace of our communities. We are determined to succeed in our mission of preventing terrorism, reducing violent crime, and protecting our Nation. Thank you again. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Torres follows:]

Testimony of John A. Torres
Special Agent in Charge
Los Angeles Field Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Before:
House Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Los Angeles, California
Tuesday, October 3, 2006

Good morning Chairman Souder and Representative Watson. Thank you for the invitation to testify on behalf of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. ATF is keenly aware of the nationwide gang problem that plagues our communities. Investigating gang violence is one of our top priorities. We understand the urgency of reducing gun violence committed by and against youth and we are dedicated to making America safer. Gun violence negatively impacts our families and our communities. ATF initiatives are designed to identify, arrest and prosecute those offenders responsible for crippling our community and also to deter young people from joining violent gangs.

Since our inception as a Bureau in 1972, we at ATF have gained a great deal of expertise in the investigation of violent street gangs. ATF's core jurisdiction--enforcing laws that prohibit the criminal misuse of firearms and explosives--has placed us at the center of gang investigations involving groups such as the Jamaican posses, the Crips and Bloods, Asian gangs, and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), to name a few. As the only federal agency that focuses exclusively on violent crime and that regulates commerce in firearms and explosives, ATF has unique statutory authority over the "tools of the trade" that make gangs a threat to public safety.

I would like to share with you some brief examples of how ATF-led gang-enforcement activities are having an impact and making our communities safer.

In Los Angeles, ATF conducted an investigation targeting numerous Crips street gangs trafficking weapons and narcotics. These gangs were also involved in armed robberies, homicides and drive by shootings in the area. To date, 37 individuals have been charged with conspiracy to violate federal firearms and narcotics laws. As a result of the investigation, cocaine, methamphetamine, and a total of 19 firearms and $50,000 in counterfeit currency have been recovered.

Recently, in Northern Virginia, ATF conducted an 18-month undercover investigation where an MS-13 operation was disrupted and dismantled. The investigation uncovered the purchase of over 80 firearms, cocaine and marijuana. To date, 20 of the defendants have pled guilty or have been found guilty in jury trials. Three of these defendants have been implicated in the murder of a former FBI informant who was scheduled to testify against an MS-13 member regarding a murder. One defendant was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment and 2 additional defendants are facing the death penalty.

Of course, our efforts to combat gang violence are not limited to Los Angeles and Virginia. In fact, Chairman Souder, our Fort Wayne, Indiana Field office investigated a firearms trafficking conspiracy consisting of 24 persons who purchased 156 firearms utilizing a multitude of straw purchasers from local firearms dealers. The two ring leaders, who are gang members, paid close friends and associates to purchase firearms in Fort Wayne and several surrounding counties. The firearms' serial numbers were obliterated, and the guns were then delivered to gang members throughout the Fort

Wayne and Chicago areas. Many of these firearms were recovered from notorious Chicago gangs such as the New Breed, Vice Lords, Four Corner Hustlers, Gangster Disciples and Black Stones. The firearms recovered had been used in the commission of serious felonies including aggravated assault, robbery and narcotics trafficking. The two ring leaders were found guilty of Federal firearm violations in April of 2005 and sentenced to serve 52 months and 110 months in federal prison, respectively.

Our work in Los Angeles, Virginia, Fort Wayne and Chicago is part of a larger national picture. These efforts to combat gang violence nationally are a major part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods—or PSN—initiative. PSN is the President's violent crime reduction initiative for the prevention and prosecution of gun and gang crime. Since the program's inception, ATF has led enforcement efforts by working closely with our State and local partners to investigate gangs and other violent firearms offenders. In FY 2005, ATF investigations resulted in the conviction of 8,353 defendants on firearms-related charges. This represents an increase of more than 17 percent over the previous fiscal year. In the past two years (fiscal year), more than 12,000 firearms linked to gang activity have been recovered in crimes, leading to a variety of criminal charges, including continuing criminal enterprise (CCE), Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act, and arson and explosives violations.

The Attorney General describes gang-related violence as the second most critical domestic crime priority behind only the war on terror. Combating violent crime is such a priority for the Attorney General that he has announced, in addition to expanding PSN to include new and enhanced anti-gang efforts, a Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative that focuses resources on gang prevention, enforcement and offender reentry efforts in six

sites throughout the country. Los Angeles is one of the sites participating in this initiative, along with Tampa, Cleveland, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Milwaukee and the "222 Corridor" that stretches from Easton to Lancaster in Pennsylvania. The Department of Justice is making available $2.5 million to each of these sites to support the anti-gang effort. ATF plays a critical role in these initiatives through our enforcement efforts, and also through our prevention strategies such as the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program, the "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" campaign, and through participation in PSN training conferences and public service announcements. ATF continues to work in coordination with other Departmental components, including the United States Marshals Service, which leads a Congressionally-established Regional Fugitive Task Force in Los Angeles.

Firearms trafficking – the illegal diversion of firearms out of lawful commerce and into the hands of prohibited persons (such as convicted felons, drug dealers and juveniles) – is often the method by which gangs and youths arm themselves. The comprehensive tracing of guns used in crimes is a key component to identifying firearms traffickers. By tracing the origins of firearms recovered in crimes, patterns emerge that allow investigators to identify gun traffickers.

The ATF Firearms Trafficking initiative targets those people who are prohibited from obtaining firearms and the firearms traffickers who arm them. According to ATF statistics, since FY 2000, convictions in trafficking cases have increased by more than 150 percent. Through our partnerships with other federal, state and local law enforcement, we continue our efforts to track and report illegal sources of firearms trafficking involving youths.

Another tool ATF deploys is the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) which utilizes imaging technology to compare gun crime evidence. The technology is designed to link recovered bullets and shell casings to other crimes. Since the inception of NIBIN, ATF and our partners have imaged more than 930,000 pieces of evidence and confirmed over 12,500 "hits" providing valuable information to investigators. In Los Angeles, we also operate a Regional Crime Gun center where we analyze firearms recovery information to identify trafficking patterns and trends in order to assist investigators.

I would like to acknowledge our outstanding partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the California Department of Corrections, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department in our continued efforts to combat youth violence.

Chairman Souder and Representative Watson, on behalf of the men and women of ATF, I thank you for your time and interest in the work performed by our agency to reduce juvenile crime and gang violence. Historically, we have worked to stop those whose violent and criminal behavior threatens the peace of our communities. We have partnered with Federal, State, local law and international law enforcement to dismantle gangs and prosecute those committing violent crimes. We are determined to succeed in our mission of preventing terrorism, reducing violent crime and protecting our nation. Thank you again, I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me start with a couple of basic groundwork-laying questions. Knowing these things are about impossible, do you have any idea of the estimated national number of gang members at this time? At various times in the last 20 years, Los Angeles has been seen as the center of 25 to 40 percent of these. Do you have any idea of the LA region's percent of the national?

Mr. LOOSLE. I know that one of the figures that has been quoted as a national number of gangs is 800,000 members and these includes all gangs, not just Bloods, Crips, Mara Salvatrucha, or 18th Street. These are all gangs. I do not know what the percentage is in the LA area of that 800,000, but I can get those figures for you.

Mr. SOUDER. Have you had an estimate in the Los Angeles region how many gang members there are; 100,000; 50,000?

Mr. LOOSLE. The figures I gave were 175,000 in the Los Angeles area.

Mr. SOUDER. That would suggest almost 20, 25 percent. We understand those figures are just estimates. Particularly when you are dealing with illegals, in many cases it is hard to estimate. It is not like they have a membership card.

Mr. LOOSLE. Yes, sir. They are estimates.

Mr. SOUDER. Twice when I was a staffer, once in the House and once in the Senate, in Los Angeles, once in the mid 1980's, once right after the riots, I met a number of individuals who were working particularly with getting activity at that time.

One man was B. J. Guinness and one of the things that he told me was that often the violence occurs when there are turf battles where you would see Hispanic, Anglo, Asian, and African American gangs as the neighborhoods would come into conflict, or if there was a structure much like drug cartels when one new gang arises after an old gang or the absence, death, arrest of a leader, a turf fight.

Is declining violence a sign that—first off, do you agree that violence in LA has declined? I kind of got that impression from your statements that the violence had declined. Although arrests are up nationally, the implication was that violence has declined here some.

The second part of that is is it because some gangs have now been able to stake out their turf and have, in fact, control and the violence is down even though the membership is high because they have effective control of certain areas?

Mr. TORRES. As far as the violent crime reducing, it has gone down and part and parcel of that is, quite frankly, Chief Bratton's COMPSTAT approach as far as dedicating resources to hot spots. Actually, ATF has taken a step toward implementing COMPSTAT also.

As far as the control of the actual geography that they claim is theirs, without getting into specifics, I mean, there are still a lot of gangs out there attempting to obtain firearms to protect their area and they are doing so aggressively. Yes, you are right; it is reducing, but they are still out there trying to attempt to get the arms that they need to protect themselves.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you believe that the violence is, in fact, most likely to occur where there are turf wars or border conflicts?

Mr. LOOSLE. I think that is one of the many areas in the case of MS–13. Because of the numerous cliques that make up MS–13 both locally, nationally, and internationally, you will have again attempts to control areas by the different cliques in MS–13. Of course, their rivalry with the 18th Street. As long as you have this loose confederation of cliques out there, there will be still some type of rivalry.

Mr. SOUDER. My understanding is one of the other big areas, and if you could comment a little bit on how we handle prisoners. I was also told in the mid 1980's and early 1990's that one of the goals to break gangs was to try to disperse them so they weren't all concentrated in Southern California prisons. Part of the Bloods and Crips went to Kansas City and then to Chicago and then into my hometown via Chicago. What is the movement through the prison improvement?

Are you tracking that? Are you looking at prison re-entry programs? Not just prison re-entry programs but actually programs in prisons are critical here because if the prisons turn into a gang expansion activity, it is a multiplier effect rather than a reduction. Could either of you address that question?

Mr. TORRES. As far as any of the Hispanic or African American gangs, I can't talk about that. However, I can talk about the strategy that the prison department has had with the Aryan Brotherhood. They have concentrated in a certain prison, in the Federal system anyway. As you may or may not know, there is a big trial going on with the Aryan Brotherhood now where two have just recently been convicted. To answer your question, I am not sure if that is helping very much as far as concentrating them in one area.

Mr. LOOSLE. I can't speak for the Bureau of Prisons, but I do know they are tracking a lot of this and this is one reason in the counter-terrorism aspect we are so concerned with Islamic radicalization in the prisons. We have the same type of radicalization or recruitment by area nations, KKK, Bloods, Crips. All the groups have that aspect to them so it is a concern and I do know the Bureau of Prisons is tracking that. I just can't speak to the specifics of it.

Mr. SOUDER. I may have a few more questions but I will yield to Congresswoman Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Loosle, can you discuss the new national gang strategy and how it differs from previous strategies which date back, as you know, to the early 1990's, and how it informs the FBI approach to gang investigations and related efforts in Los Angeles, nationally? And then let's zero in on Los Angeles.

Mr. LOOSLE. Actually it's sort of a multi-layer approach. What we are doing nationally is trying to identify those gangs that are most violent. In fact, I believe Mr. Torres referred to Gang Tech, which is also a new component within the Department of Justice that does target the most violent gangs.

What we do with information that we get from local, State, and, of course, our Federal agencies is put that together and try to see where the hot spots are geographically and then what gangs are the most notorious or most violent in those hot spots.

We also gain a lot of information from our colleagues overseas internationally and try to track members of gangs that are floating back and forth transnationally to see what type of gangs we need to focus on.

Ms. WATSON. When Representative Simpson Brenner, Chair of Judiciary, had his bill on the floor that would identify the hot spots of gang activities, I had the bill amended to consult with local, State, and Federal elected officials. These are our districts. We know them well but we don't get this dialog coming between your agency and us. We hear on the ground. We are in our districts all the time.

Representative Souder goes back and forth to his and I fly all the way out to my district every weekend. We don't have that much exposure. We have to call the FBI in to share with us. We can share information with you. I would ask that you be sure that we are kept informed and we need to have a statistical base so we can enter into this debate in a positive way. I would appreciate you taking that back to your agency.

Mr. LOOSLE. Thank you and I will, Congresswoman. I agree with you that we do need to have both law enforcement and the community to talk closer together on prevention, on our intervention techniques, and on rehabilitation programs on this three-pronged approach. I believe if we all do it from the grassroots level all the way to the top for decisionmaking, we can be more effective.

Ms. WATSON. This is why I am so pleased that we are holding this hearing, Representative Souder, right here in the center of these activities. We need to do more information sharing.

To Mr. Torres, what provisions are in place to ensure that firearms dealers are complying with their Federal firearm license and that their guns aren't ending up in the hands of children? I am going to get very personal with this. I have a firearm dealer right in the center of my district around the corner from two high schools, around the corner from a middle school, in walking distance of four elementary schools. We have been trying to close them down.

I have gone to ATF. I said they are out of compliance. ATF gave them their license again. We have an ordinance that was passed 3 years ago that prohibited gunshots within that corridor, Crenshaw corridor. It is being ignored by the city attorney. I have gone to the mayor. I have gone to the Attorney General and no one has gone in and investigated this.

Where are our young people getting the guns? We do not manufacture AK–47s. I do know as a witness, I live right up the street from the shop, that there are automatic weapons that are prohibited for sale here in the State of California. I do not know why ATF renewed their license. I was told by the owner that they sell to LAPD, to foreign nations, and to the military.

I saw a lot of activity going on during the 38-day war between Lebanon and Israel. We have two ordinances. They were given a phony license and it says, "No ammunition." They sell ammunition. They bought up property across the street that used to be a restaurant. It is called Total Experience. They have that place stocked full with weapons.

Next-door to them was a 98 cent store owned by some Jamaicans. They wanted to buy the property. The guy wouldn't sell. He comes back several days later and his store has been conveniently fired bombed. I called the chief of police. No feedback. What is going on? There is not a gun manufacturer in my district, but the guns are located here. Can you respond?

Mr. TORRES. Yes, ma'am. I would be glad to. For the record I share your concerns. As a parent I do share your concerns. The licensee that you are referring to, when it was brought to my attention last year, we pursued an inspection vigorously, vigorously. Our inspectors did everything they did within their power in that inspection. We are obligated and mandated under the provisions of the Gun Control Act if that licensee follows all the mandates that they are required to, i.e., not convicted of a felony, 21 years old, subject to a background check, we are obligated to give them a license.

However, if the city had found that they were out of ordinance, we could have pulled their license and that didn't happen. They were still zoned correctly within the city of Los Angeles to be a Federal firearms licensee, so at that point we really had no choice but to give them the license. We were obligated. We had to under the rules passed by Congress.

Ms. WATSON. Let me tell you the facts. They are out of compliance with the Crenshaw corridor specific plan which outlawed gun shops and porn shops. They are out of compliance with the city's pavilions for locating. They never had a public hearing to let the community know that what was a bank and then a pawn shop, Collateral Lenders, is now a gun shop.

They never had that so I don't know what kind of investigation ATF did. We've got the laws on the book. I am going after the mayor on this one. I am going after the city council on this one. I am going after you. I have been on this for almost 3 years now and every time I call ATF I get a different story. They told me in the beginning, "Oh, you are right in time because we haven't given them their license."

I said, "They are out of compliance. Come and check it out." I have the records. I have a chronology. I have eye witnesses. OK? The guy wears a yamika. He hires locals to come out and tell me that we are prejudiced and we don't want them doing business in our community. It has nothing to do with that. They are operating illegally. The community wants them out. The gang members know they are there. They are right at a park. We have shootouts in that park. The local ordinances are being violated. I would like to go with ATF to do an inspection.

I would like to have the city attorney, someone from the mayor's office and the police commission with me when I do that. And you. You are responsible. You are allowing somebody who is not being truthful to sell guns out of our community that kids use to kill each other. I will not tolerate it. Take that.

Mr. SOUDER. Under congressional rules applause or boos or audience participation is not part of a hearing. We wanted to open up the hearing, but I am not going to object to the "all rights" and "amens." I realize that may be cultural, but if you could, because

we are trying to have an important discussion about how to tackle these issues, I would appreciate the audience following that rule.

Do you have any other questions?

Ms. WATSON. One more question and this is for ATF again, Mr. Torres. Child Access Prevention, called CAP laws, to guns have been enacted in approximately 15 States. What impact have these laws had on reducing youth violence and illicit guns from being on our streets?

Mr. TORRES. As far as the State statistics I couldn't tell you, because each State keeps their own statistics on that. The Federal Government, however, did pass a law last year on having gun laws sold with each firearm and those statistics are starting to come out now and they look promising, because anytime you give one lock on one gun, that is a safer gun and that is always a good thing to have a safe gun.

Ms. WATSON. If you can tell me right here in the State of California the impact. I just want to know what you think would be the source of all the guns that our people use to kill each other. We just had a shooting last night, a gentleman and a 5-year-old. Where are those guns coming from? I don't know of a gun manufacturer in this area. Where do the guns come from? What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. TORRES. There was a law passed in 2005 that prevents me from giving you the trace information.

Ms. WATSON. You don't have to give me the trace information. Off the top of your head where do you think?

Mr. TORRES. Off the top of my head from my experience the guns are coming from gun shows and from straw purchasers.

Ms. WATSON. Let me ask you at gun shows, at swap meets I understand a lot of them are sold. Are your people out there to monitor and to give oversight?

Mr. TORRES. We actively pursue any and all information we get on firearms trafficking going on, be it a gun show, be it a swap meet. We actively pursue those, yes.

Ms. WATSON. When you say actively pursue, if you know guns are being sold, or are to be sold, are you out there or do you wait until someone tips you off or calls you to move in? How does that work?

Mr. TORRES. I mean, we have priorities. As far as if we know a gun trafficker is working there, we get information, we get tipped, we get trace information, we will dedicate resources to that area, to that person to investigate to make sure that he gets arrested, or she gets arrested, and no firearms are hitting the street.

Ms. WATSON. Just last week Congress passed—I didn't, but Congress did pass out a bill to relax the requirements on gun shop owners to make it more difficult to sue them when their weapons are being used in a crime. What this bill requires is a showing of malicious intent to sell that gun. Now, what it does—it is sponsored by the NRA—it relaxes the laws relative to the selling of weapons.

In the early 1970's there was a boxcar stalled on the train tracks filled with ammunition, filled with guns. If you want to destroy a community you do two things. You take drugs in there and you take weapons and ammunition in there. Come back in 10 years and

you will have destroyed a community and that is what is happening.

I don't see enough activity on the part of the ATF in this area. You don't get in touch with us. We have to call you and then I get people coming into my office who can't answer any of these questions. I said, "Why did you come?" I haven't been able to talk to you directly but I would like to sit down and talk to you and tell you what I know about my district, what I see every day, what parents come and tell me about their kids being killed with guns and you don't talk to me so something has broken in terms of your responsibility over the guns. To say, "We can't find anything wrong. We let this guy operate. We gave him his license," when he has violated.

LA Times did a story on the city attorney taking money from one of the partners of the guy who owns the gun shop. You know, underneath the table some things are going on. I am not making accusations. I am describing what I know. ATF needs to be a partner with us to try to get the guns off our streets. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. I have just a couple additional questions I want to pursue. Isn't it illegal to sell a gun to somebody who has a criminal record?

Mr. TORRES. Somebody who is prohibited and that could be a convicted felon. That could be illegal user of narcotics. That could be someone who has been dishonorably discharged from the military.

Mr. SOUDER. Are juvenile records considered as part of that?

Mr. TORRES. No, usually not.

Mr. SOUDER. So a juvenile at a game could continue to get a gun even though they have a criminal record?

Mr. TORRES. It depends how the court gave him or her that felony conviction. If they are a convicted felon, they cannot have it.

Mr. SOUDER. So it depends how they chose to prosecute it because this kind of directly gets into the gang question because many juvenile records are sealed, which if they had been an adult would have prohibited the gun purchase. Is that correct?

Mr. TORRES. That is correct.

Mr. SOUDER. I wanted to make sure for the record also because we have had discussion of some of the Hispanic and African American as well as Anglo gangs. My understanding from the time I have been here before was that some of the Asian gangs are among the most violent in this area. One of the things that was a little bit unusual, and I wonder if this is still correct, is that some of them are specialty gangs as opposed to necessarily neighborhood gangs.

I heard of one cases where there was one that specialized in diamond or jewelry store robberies, that they had been hired in San Francisco or other places, even in other cities because of the expertise, much coming out of the violence of Vietnam era and some of the Asian violence.

Then, most recently, in relationships with the I–5 corridor to British Columbia where we see this huge influx of B.C. Bud coming down, cocaine and guns going north to Canada, Washington State being a big transit zone going into the midwest, largely because of

Vietnamese gun activity in British Columbia. Do you see that here? What are your comments on that for the record, not only on that particular type but any other type of Asian gangs?

Mr. LOOSLE. On the Asian gangs we have worked a number of cases on Asian gangs as criminal organizations. The structure of the Asian gangs is somewhat different from those of MS–13 or the Bloods or the Crips, but the criminal activity they engage in sometimes is similar. They are engaged in some narcotic trafficking, gun smuggling, and home invasions obviously within their community.

When you say "specialty" I can't give you that information. I don't have it with me right now, but the structure of the Asian gangs is very different, but we do target Asian gangs also. We have had a number of very successful cases in targeting the most notorious Asian gangs in this area.

Mr. SOUDER. As a pattern, are they more violent, about the same? More guns or less guns?

Mr. TORRES. As far as the arms that the various gangs collect, I mean, it seems the higher caliber the better. They all do that across the board.

Mr. SOUDER. It is not by accident that the violence in the 1980's coming out of the Vietnam gangs is partly related to these kids grew up where there was violence in Vietnam and fled to here. It is not an accident that the Salvadoran gangs are particularly that way because of the conflicts in Central America and it got exported into here. The question is when it starts happening in the second generation, then you wonder what has happened here as opposed to the first generation coming in.

I just wondered if you had any comments on that and where the next place may be. That is why the radical Islamic movement is of a particular concern because that is where the developing violence is around the world and the young people who flee that are likely to come in more violent than the existing gangs.

Mr. TORRES. As far as historical information, we have seen a pattern. Personally, I have not looked at it but I can get back to you on that.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you and ATF have jurisdiction over IUDs? Would you consider that a firearm?

Mr. TORRES. Under the Gun Control Act it is a considered a firearm. That is correct.

Mr. SOUDER. Have you seen any of this type of activity which we all fear on our shores?

Mr. TORRES. As far as the statistics, it is about the same but we are working closely with the FBI and the State and local agencies to address it as far as from a task force approach from the JTTF, etc.

Mr. SOUDER. My understanding is that a lot of the pattern, other than the Salvadoran gangs, MS–13, is much more decentralized in their structures around the country, which makes tracking harder and some of our traditional FBI and other tactics in breaking them up much more difficult, particularly as they move into illegal narcotics.

As we see meth labs shut down as we control precursor chemicals we are hearing there is a rise in that coming across the border. It is often protected by these Hispanic gangs that are very decen-

tralized and it challenges, if it is true, our Federal presumption of being able to break up networks. Would you agree on that?

Mr. LOOSLE. Yes. The Hispanic gangs, particularly MS–13, because of their structure are a little bit more difficult to track. I, myself, have spent at least 8 years living and working in Central America, 5 of those years were in El Salvador, watching how this has evolved.

The danger for the United States and also for Mexico and the Central American nations is the possibility of these gangs being for national security reasons part of wittingly or unwittingly smuggling aliens of special interest into the United States or into their countries or becoming part of a disaffected political group that might hire them to conduct terrorist acts in their countries or also in the United States. They don't have a structure like the Mafia or the Cosa Nostra.

They don't have that central pyramid because of their loose confederation, but they are associated with each other. In Central America recently we have seen where some of the cliques have actually gone together to commit criminal acts.

I recently returned from El Salvador where the Department of Justice including ATF, DHS, and a number of other Federal agencies, met with and had a seminar with police officers, prison officials, prosecutors, individuals involved in prevention and rehabilitation met for 2 weeks. The seminar just concluded last week and many of these issues were brought up.

Mr. SOUDER. Does the Federal Gang Initiative recognize the fact that the different gang challenges in the United States are fairly different in their origin and potential solution?

Mr. LOOSLE. What we are trying to do, actually, is look at the commonalities to see what the best practices may be in both prevention, rehabilitation, and intervention.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me try that question again. In the African American community, historically the gangs have risen out of areas of high poverty, and with radical Islamization that isn't necessarily true. In London they came out of middle class families. In Asian gangs they seem to have a little bit different origin and there seems to be more idealogy in some of the Hispanic gangs. Would you disagree with any of those statements?

While there might be commonalities, that would suggest if income isn't there and if idealogy is inserted in, that the same anti-gang approaches that would be critical here in an African American community might be different than trying to tackle kids who went to Wahhabi school or education or a cluster of Hispanics who feel that the United States has stolen their territory.

Mr. LOOSLE. I think the first level of prevention is the family and absent the family then individuals their first instinct is for protection and that is how many of these gang structures have arisen is to protect themselves from other gangs. It really varies as far as the level of poverty.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Do you have any additional questions?

Ms. WATSON. I just want to ask a question, Mr. Chairman, and this is to Mr. Loosle.

Can you discuss the importance of Federal, State, and local cooperation in gang investigation?

Mr. LOOSLE. Cooperation among all these agencies is critical and essential. Additionally, not only in intervention but prevention and rehabilitation. There needs to be a balance among all those areas because if we put all our efforts into intervention, that is not going to solve the problem. We need to have a balance for prevention and rehabilitation, but we need to work together, Federal, State, and local agencies, law enforcement, and community groups together in each of these areas.

Ms. WATSON. And just to followup on that one, Mr. Chairman. It will take me a second.

There were efforts to put together a gang truce between major rival gangs. Can you tell me if that is working, if that is in place? And do we have the various individuals as part of that discussion?

Mr. LOOSLE. I apologize. I don't have information on the gang truce. I am being told that there is no overriding or high-profile truce. There is nothing to prevent gangs from entering into truces with each other whether it be Crips, Bloods, MS–13, or 18th Street. At this time I am not aware of a truce.

Ms. WATSON. Do you know anywhere in the country where there have been truces established among violent gangs themselves, originating with themselves, or with the input of some organizing agency? We are going to have some witnesses that might be able to address this in the Los Angeles area. I was just wondering what you can tell us in terms of nationally.

Mr. LOOSLE. I can't cite the exact instances. I know nationally there have been truces between gang members. There have also been I guess you could call a truce between law enforcement and gangs for having a nonviolent or staking out a nonviolent area. I know that in El Salvador the 18th Street and MS–13 have come to an agreement that they will not fight with each other if confronted by the police; they will fight the police first. In that sense, I guess you could say it is not so much a truce but a unified effort. I don't know of any specific truce. I know they are out there. They have been used and I believe some have had some success.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you very much to the witnesses. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. I want to thank you both. We may have some followup questions. I presume that the subject is going to continue to expand over the next couple years. This is kind of the home base, as both of you said, of a lot of the original gang activity and the spread of the national gangs. I would appreciate you being responsive to those questions. Also thank the agents in the field for taking risks as we try to figure out these organizations. It is not an easy challenge and I thank you for it.

I do want to add on a personal note that a number of years ago at multiple forums I heard a man named Leon Watkins who negotiated the most well known of the Blood and Crip truce in the 1980's and then a second truce with them and he made multiple presentations. Then once at an informal forum with major foundations, and this was when I was a staffer, legislators in the administration, he said that in reality in spite of what he had been saying

publicly, one of the key things was one of the leaders, I forget which group, became a committed Christian.

I know this isn't politically correct, but he gave his life to Christ and decided he was going to change. He went back to his gang and they negotiated an agreement. A lot of this takes changes of hearts and you've got to work at it. We need to do the law enforcement side. We need to do what we can to help in the communities, but a lot of this is reaching people's individual hearts. When we have seen these major impacts, when we get to the bottom of it, that tends to be there.

I thank both of you for coming and if the next panel would start to come forward, we will get you seated and we will go on to panel two. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, off the record.]

Mr. SOUDER. The meeting will come back to order. This panel now I will read each of their names. Mr. Danny Trejo, film actor and former gang member; Chief Ronnie Williams, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; Jerald Cavitt, former gang member; Captain Regina Scott, patrol commanding officer, Southwest Division, Los Angeles Police Department; Charlotte Jordan, CEO, Mothers on the March; Dan Isaacs, chief operating officer, Los Angeles Unified School District; Eddie Jones, president, Los Angeles Civil Rights Association; and Rev. Dr. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., senior pastor at Bryant Temple AME Church, Board Member of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention.

For those of you who didn't hear, as an oversight committee we require each witness to be sworn in, so if you would each stand now that you are all seated, raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SOUDER. Let the record show that each of the witnesses responded in the affirmative. We thank each of you for taking time from your schedule to participate in this hearing and we are looking forward to your testimony. We'll start with Mr. Trejo. Each of you need to pull the microphone so the stenographer can get all the words and so that people in the back can hear as well.

STATEMENTS OF DANNY TREJO, FILM ACTOR AND FORMER GANG MEMBER; CHIEF RONNIE WILLIAMS, LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; JERALD CAVITT, FORMER GANG MEMBER; CAPTAIN REGINA SCOTT, PATROL COMMANDING OFFICER, SOUTHWEST DIVISION, LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT; CHARLOTTE JORDAN, CEO, MOTHERS ON THE MARCH; DAN ISAACS, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; EDDIE JONES, PRESIDENT, LOS ANGELES CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION; AND REV. DR. CLYDE W. ODEN, JR., SENIOR PASTOR AT BRYANT TEMPLE AME CHURCH, BOARD MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SUMMIT ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION

STATEMENT OF DANNY TREJO

Mr. TREJO. Good morning distinguished Members of Congress, committee, and everybody else who is here. My name is Danny Trejo. I am an actor as well as Director of Western Pacific Rehab in Glendale. We detoxify drug addicts. I was born in Maywood,

raised in Temple Street, Echo Park, Lincoln Heights, and Pacoima, California.

I became involved in drugs and criminal activities and gangs at a very early age landing me in juvenile hall, forestry camp, and Youth Authority. That is the prep school for the State penitentiary.

After a small stint in Youth Authority I graduated and ended up in the State penitentiary. I attended almost every single penitentiary in the State of California that was in operation during my incarceration including Gino, Soledad, San Quentin, Folsom, Vacaville, Tracy, Susanville, and Sierra. At this time there were different types of rehabilitation for inmates such as school, self-help groups, numerous athletic activities, group counseling, and one-on-one counseling.

You could go to Alcoholics Anonymous, meetings, and attend church services. I myself helped to start one of the first NA meetings in Soledad. My title was Inmate Social Catalyst. I would help counsel new inmates about the pitfalls that they might encounter living life on the inside. Now, due to prison reform, we have limited resources in the struggle to help rehabilitate inmates. Our prisons have become factories that turn young men into animals, instead of what they suggest by their name, "correctional facilities."

Our prison guards make more money than our teachers. Yet, the California Department of Correction has a budget of over $7.4 billion. How many prison facilities do we have in California? Fifty-four youth and adult facilities. We send our youth to prison and youth authorities. When they come out they are hardcore gang members running the streets and calling the shots.

They no longer have to be jumped into the gang. They are the gang. We would like to form a committee of ex-offenders with law enforcement who have solid reputations who are respected in both prisons and in communities. Believe me, we do have people in law enforcement that are well respected in both prisons and the community.

In order to provide an alternative lifestyle not only to those who have yet to encounter the system but those who are already incarcerated in hopes that we might veer off the path of destruction that has kept so many of them in prison for their entire lives. These ex-offenders are viewed as the Ph.D.s when it comes to gang subculture. They have lived it, thrived in it, survived it, and are now productive members of society trying to save our youth.

One of our first priorities would be to secure the safety of our students in school, which has long been a breeding ground for both gang and racial tension. For whatever reason, thank God, Mayor Villagosa has taken the bull by the horns and is now going to make the Los Angeles City School Board directors accountable to those they serve. Maybe some day instead of saying, "Where you from?" students will greet each other with, "How are you doing?"

When law enforcement and community can start working together, we can come to a positive solution that will save our youth and will help prevent cases like Manuel Rilrahas who at the time of his arrest was an 18-year-old skateboarder and a non-gang member who is at present facing murder charges that he did not commit.

Any ex-offender with any type of street knowledge could have worked with the police and would have come to the conclusion together that this young man, now one hung jury later, at 20 years old his second trial starts tomorrow. Let's start looking for justice instead of a DA conviction rate and filling our prisons with young people. I am here with my associates to extend our hand in order to not only work with you but also let you use our expertise to help youth in our communities.

Councilwoman Watson, I believe that I first worked with you awhile back with Project Heavy and the Narcotics Prevention Project. I am glad to see that you are still in the fight because we need more people like you championing our cause. I was listening to the dialog and our Police Department of Los Angeles, our Sheriff's Department, they are doing a great job of taking the guns off the street.

Somebody please tell me how are those guns getting here? We don't have any gun factories in Los Angeles I don't think. I don't think in any community. I know they have one in Pacoima. I know there is not one in Venice. I know there is not one in Compton. Please, somebody tell me how can our police department, how can our sheriff's department keep getting AK–47s off the street if they keep coming?

I have never seen a gun show run by African American or Mexican American people ever. We have gun shows in Utah. We have gun shows in Montana. Somewhere along the line we had better start putting barbed wire around these gun shows instead of building more prisons in California. God bless you all. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Williams.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF RONNIE WILLIAMS

Mr. WILLIAMS. Good morning. I thank the esteemed panel for inviting the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. I am here on behalf of Sheriff Lee Baca. I will tell you I am a native of Los Angeles, Watts, California, I like to say. I was born and raised here. This, too, is personal for me as well as business. I have had two nephews killed in gang violence that weren't gang members. I also have a nephew in Lancaster State Prison for being involved in a ride-by shooting, so I have come full circle on all ends of the spectrum.

I would like to start off by making a statement by William Edward Burkhardt Du Bois who said in his book, "The Souls of Black Folk 1903," that "The chief problem in any community cursed with crime is not punishment of the criminals but the preventing of the young from being trained to crime." Very prophetic 1903 that it refers to what we are experiencing in 2006.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department believes that our youth are the future of our county. It takes an active role in providing programs to assist our youth with obtaining a successful future.

In 1985, the Sheriff's Youth Foundation was created based upon the belief that crime prevention programs focusing on the youth are key to developing safer communities. The foundation works with young people throughout the county for tools of success, and

empowers them to utilize these tools while having some enjoyment and fun.

The programs exist to offer LA County youth a safe and supportive environment where they can interact with positive role models, interact with law enforcement officers. They receive life guidance, factual information, educational tutoring, the opportunity to participate in after-school activities, and esteem-building exercises.

The Sheriff's Department believes overall success in combatting youth and gang violence resides in a three-pronged approach: prevention, intervention, and suppression. Prevention by education of our youth before they make the choice to become involved in criminal activity. The Sheriff has several programs under prevention. A couple of them, the Youth Activities Leagues, called YALs. Of the 21 Sheriff's Stations throughout the county, more than half offer YAL activities. They are viable alternatives to drug involvement and gang membership. More than 20,000 children and teenagers participate in this program each year.

Another program, Success Through Awareness and Resistance, STAR, discusses drug, gang, and violence prevention. Education classes are co-taught throughout Los Angeles County by specially trained Sheriff's deputies assigned to the unit. The STAR program is at work in 370 schools within 50 school districts and 30 contract cities and the unincorporated areas. The program reaches more than 100,000 youth a year.

In addition to these programs, I have several programs involved under the focus of intervention. First and foremost is the VIDA program, Vital Instruction Direction Alternative, run by COPS Bureau, Community Oriented Policing Service. VIDA is a 16-week community assisted re-directional program facilitated by the LA County Sheriff's Department that focuses on addressing juvenile delinquency issues related to gang involvement.

Youth who have been identified as being involved in a gang lifestyle are referred to the VIDA program through the use of VIDA referral forms. Referrals to the program are made by parents, the court, other law enforcement agencies, social services, school districts, and religious institutions. Currently we have two VIDA sites, one in Antelope Valley and one in Century. We just started another one in Century station last month.

Another program is in operation through our Operation Safe Streets Gang Bureau, a better LA program. OSS personnel are part of a collaborative effort with the Pacific Institute. It provides transformational education and cognitive thinking skills. The institute made a commitment to assist South Los Angeles in reducing gang violence.

It has the support of USC football coach Pete Carroll. There is a custody component attached to the program for adult offenders called New Direction to Success and a youth program called Pathways to Excellence. In all, the Sheriff's Department has over 38 programs designed to provide for our youth.

Last is suppression and suppression, is what police departments do. We direct our resources into reducing crime and increasing the quality of life in areas. For this I have a small example. The Sheriff's Department tasked me with having a task force in the city of

Compton. This task force has been involved in Compton since January, but I am going to take a small slice of this for you.

Since August 6, 2006, we have made 158 felony arrests. We have recovered 170 guns. Distinguished panel, that is about 20 guns a week. These are the guns. These are weapons of war. These are weapons that my son uses who is in the U.S. Army. Twenty guns a week in a 10 square mile community.

As Mr. Trejo said, I don't know any manufacturer of guns in LA County. When you look at 10 square miles and 170 guns since August, imagine another 10 square miles some place else. We don't know how to stop this. We can have all the programs we want and in law enforcement we deal with statistics and anytime we deem ourself successful when we have a lowering of crime or violence in any community that we police, we look at our statistics and we can enjoy that for a minute, but these statistics don't matter to victims of violent crime. These stats don't matter to survivors of violent crimes. It doesn't matter to them. For us one shooting, one murder is one too many.

Congresswoman Watson referred to a homicide last night in the city of Compton. A 10-year-old boy, and a male, African American adult was killed virtually for no reason. That is the life in communities. That is what happens in these communities that has these guns. As long as we have a proliferation of firearms, we are going to have an issue.

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you gangs have crossed over. Not just gang-on-gang crimes but in the hate crimes, black-on-brown. Gang crime is in the upsurge. I had five black-on-brown shootings in the past week in my division. I don't even want to ask my friends in LAPD how many they've had or Englewood Police Department has had. Just five in the last week, so they have crossed over not just in gang-on-gang robbery but into hate crimes and it is impacting the communities in LA County. That needs to be dealt with.

We also, in LA County, have a thriving clergy council and some of the people in the audience. Chairman Souder, I didn't bring them but they are out here in the audience, part of our burgeoning clergy council of African American and Latino pastors that want this issue addressed. They met 2 weeks ago at USC and they are about to memorialize a document on how they want that addressed. It is a serious problem that needs to be tended to. Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Cavitt.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Baca follows:]

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Combating Youth Violence

Overview of the programs provided
by the Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department

Leroy D. Baca
Sheriff
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

September 20, 2006

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department strongly believes that our children are the future of our Country, the County of Los Angeles, and the Sheriff's Department. With that said, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department takes an active role in providing programs that assist our youth with obtaining a successful future. The programs focus on providing a positive environment for the youth of Los Angeles County.

The Sheriff's Youth Foundation was created in 1985 based upon the belief that crime prevention programs focused on youth are key to developing safer communities. The Foundation works with young people throughout Los Angeles County to provide them tools for success, and empowers them to utilize these tools - while also having some fun. The programs exist to offer Los Angeles County youth a safe and supportive environment where they can interact with positive role models, including law enforcement officers. They receive life guidance, factual information, educational tutoring, as well as participation in after-school programs and esteem-building activities.

The Foundation Staff and its Board see to the funding and support of two countywide programs for youth participants: Youth Activity Leagues (YAL's), including Youth Activity Centers, and Success Through Awareness & Resistance (STAR) Program. Combined, these two programs serve more than 120,000 Los Angeles County youth each year.

DEPARTMENT WIDE PROGRAMS

Youth Activity Leagues (YAL's)
Of the 21 Sheriff's Stations throughout Los Angeles County, more than half of them offer organized YAL activities for girls and boys as viable alternatives to drug involvement and gang membership. More than 20,000 children and teenagers participate in YAL activities each year with activities divided by age brackets.

Success Through Awareness & Resistance (STAR)
Drug, gang and violence prevention education classes are co-taught throughout Los Angeles County schools by specially trained Sheriff's deputies assigned to the Success Through Awareness and Resistance (STAR) Unit and classroom teachers. STAR programs are at work in 370 schools within 50 school districts in 30 contract cities and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The program annually reaches more than 100,000 youth.

FIELD OPERATIONS REGION II PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES (COPS) BUREAU

Vital Instruction Directional Alternative (VIDA)

VIDA is a 16-week community assisted re-directional program facilitated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department that focuses on addressing juvenile delinquency issues related to gang involvement. Youth who have been identified as being involved in a gang lifestyle are referred to the VIDA Program through the use of a VIDA referral form.

Referrals to the VIDA Program are made by parents, the court, other law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, school districts, and religious institutions.

Currently, there are two VIDA sites in operation; Antelope Valley, and Century Sheriff's Station.

Youth In Focus

Youth in Focus was established in 1997 by the Community Development Commission/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (CDC/HACOLA), in order to build positive self-esteem through learning and exploring other life paths for youth living in subsidized housing projects. Deputies assigned to the CDC/HACOLA assist with organizing and facilitating a variety of youth activities as a way to mentor young people and to provide them with life skills.

CARSON STATION

Gang Diversion Program

The Gang Diversion Program has been in existence for approximately 8 months and is currently single-handedly run by one Carson Station deputy. The program works with community based organizations that have been hand selected due to their reputations, credentials and reliability. The deputy collaboratively works with these organizations to develop intervention plans to assist gang members and their families who are desirous of breaking the gang lifestyle cycle. Since the inception of the program, the deputy has amassed a caseload of 70 cases, and receives approximately 30 interest calls per week regarding the program; this is an average growth rate of approximately 8 cases per month since the program began.

Playing It Straight

This program is a collaborative effort between Carson Sheriff's Station, Home Depot Center, and the City of Carson to create a ten-week youth intervention program that helps kids develop practical life skills and enhance their decision-making ability while participating in various athletic activities. This program is managed by two Carson Station deputies who provide candid presentations on numerous topics ranging from gangs, drugs, alcohol, peer pressure and character building. Classes meet weekly on Wednesdays. Sports topics covered include: soccer, beach volleyball, track and field, cycling, tennis, and athletic/nutritional training. The sports are taught by professional "world class" athletes and coaches at the Home Depot Center in Carson. Parents of the attending students are required to attend two mandatory 3-hour parenting classes as part of the program.

CENTURY STATION

Century Station currently has the following Intervention programs/projects which address gang and/or youth violence:

Century Station's Youth Athletic League (YAL) located in the community of Florence/Firestone Park provides the following alternative programs for inner city children residing in our area:

- Computer lab, and an after school tutorial program
- Boxing, football, karate and dance
- Boot Camp

The YAL also hosts the **Vital Intervention Direction Alternatives Program (VIDA)** which is managed and operated under the Department's COPS program. This program was developed to assist "at-risk" youth in our community to develop self-respect, leadership abilities and acceptance of others.

We also have the **Sheriff's Leadership Academy (SLA)** which is an alternative school project sponsored in part by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education, in collaboration with Masada Homes, and HOPE'S NEST, which are nonprofit organizations. This school was developed to create a gang/drug free environment for inner city children, focusing on academic excellence, and developing strong leadership qualities.

Century Station **Explorer Program**, which was program designed for youth who have an expressed interest in law enforcement.

COMPTON STATION

Community Academy

A 12- week educational class that gives community members an overview of the Sheriff's Department which includes tours of the jails, the shooting range, the Laser Village facility and the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB).

At-Risk Youth Mentoring Program and Referral Service

Community Relations assist local schools in providing positive role models and mentoring to at-risk youth. The staff provides referral information for troubled youth.

School Career Days

Deputy personnel attend schools and provide a positive contact and interaction to all school age children. They also provide drug and gang awareness information.

Peace Marches

Empowering the block clubs and residents to take a more assertive approach toward community involvement.

Clergy Council

Providing all ministers and pastors a forum and a point of contact to assist in addressing the needs of the community.

Volunteer on Patrol

A program which trains community volunteers to assist field units in nonthreatening duties. (i.e. patrol checks, block club meetings, and issuing citations)

Explorer Program

Youth between the ages of 15-21 are trained to assist at the station. Teaches leadership and builds self confidence.

Midnight Basketball League

Local gang members meet to discuss cultural diversity and the image of young youth while participating in a basketball league.

VIDA Program

At-risk youth referral program-Century Station.

Youth Athletic Center (YAL)

Computer Learning Center, soapbox derby, overnight camping, deputy mentoring, boxing, golfing, and basketball.

Viper Program

The VIPER program was a federally funded grant program. The focus was two prong. Education, intervention and prevention to middle grade students on the dangers and awareness of gang and violence.

Directed enforcement on targeted gangs due to recent gang crimes and violence. This information was provided by DB, OSS/GET statistical data.

Weed and Seed

The Weed and Seed Program was a five year federally funded grant program. In essence, the concept was to provide law enforcement efforts to a pre-selected high crime area, and restructure through education and community based programs.

Truancy Sweeps

This was a joint assignment with Compton School Police. Our efforts were to prevent and deter youth from committing crimes while not attending school. Hopefully, encouraging youth to stay in school.

Gang Suppression

Apprehension of notorious street gang members through successful arrest and prosecution.

LENNOX STATION

Description Of Programs:

The Lennox Sheriff's Station Youth Activity League provides the young people, within the Second Supervisorial District, with positive alternatives to drugs, gangs, anti-social

and criminal behavior. Sheriff's Department personnel coordinate various community and holiday events emphasizing the principles of community service, artistic expression, and sportsmanship. The Lennox Youth Activity League provides foundations for young people within the community to enrich their lives and provide opportunities that would not ordinarily be available to them. By providing social activities, educational and athletic programs, and cultural field trips and events, these young people will be exposed to opportunities, which will stimulate self-motivated growth and development.

Program Goals:

The goal of the Lennox Youth Activity League is to allow the youth in the area, a safe haven to learn, play, and grow. With the programs we provide, our main objective is to be pro-active in preventing youth from falling into the negative influences that surround their community. By providing alternatives to negative street influences, such as gangs

and narcotics, we seek to allow services in the areas of mentoring, youth forums, sports/athletic events, counseling, and academic assistance. With the ever-changing challenges that are faced by the youth within this service area, there is a constant need for positive influences and motivational programs to raise self-esteem and provide skills which will serve as tools for future life challenges.

Gang Intervention:

Two programs that deal specifically with gang prevention, among other things, are the "Girl's Social Club" and the "Lennox Gents" Programs. These programs use forum style dialogue to discuss the challenges that youth of today are faced with. In these programs we discuss gangs and the consequences to joining gangs. Often we encounter youth who are considering joining a gang and these programs give those youth other choices and show them the negative side of gang involvement

Girl's Social Club - targeting the age group of ages 9-17 years. This social group focuses on peer pressure, etiquette, drug and alcohol awareness, character building, leadership skills, and academic achievement.

Wednesday 4:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Lennox Gents - targeting the age group of ages 9-17 years. This program is a brother program to the Girl's Social Club. This program will provide leadership skills, mentoring, guidance and counseling for young men.

Monday 4:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

LOMITA STATION

Harbor Hills Programs - Region II COPS Deputies

1. CORE Youth Mentoring Program - One on one counseling, youth mentoring, school/parent visits, and youth intervention field trips. There are currently five participants in the program ranging in age from 13-20 years old.
2. Youth/JJCPA Intervention Program - Between 12-30 youths with their parents participate in a basketball program every Friday evening between 1800-2200 hrs.
3. At Risk Teen Program - Joint program with the City of Lomita Parks and Recreation. At-risk youth are encouraged to participate in the numerous classes and organized sport programs. In addition, the South Bay Rotary recently donated $6,000 for the purchase of school and sports related items for at risk youths.

Community Resource (CO.RE.) Team

The CO.RE Team consists of three deputies who handle quality of life issues associated with the Peninsula Region Contract Cities (Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates, and Rolling Hills). The Team is often asked to address youth violence issues at local schools. At the beginning of each school year, the CO.RE Team speaks to incoming 6th graders related to "bullying" other students. There is an assembly in which they tackle the problem by offering "anti-bullying" techniques through role playing.

At the high school level, the Team meets with school principals and faculty members to develop solutions to school violence problems. One of their most successful techniques is to maintain a frequent presence at both area high schools. This has had a dramatic impact in reducing the incidents of youth violence at the sites.

The CO.RE Team also utilizes a community involvement approach to affect this problem. They have spoken to Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) groups, Neighborhood Watch groups, and Homeowner Associations to provide and gather intelligence related to this topic. The CO.RE Team goal is to be accessible to the community at all times. It has worked well and the Team has been recognized as one of the top 50 police programs in the Nation.

Student and the Law Class

The Peninsula Region Contract Cities provide funding to have a deputy teach high school students about current legal issues and how they relate to their lives. Some of the topics discussed in the class include gang and youth violence. Videos and guest lecturers are utilized to generate discussion in these areas.

OPERATIONS SAFE STREETS (OSS)

A Better LA Program

Operations Safe Streets Bureau personnel are part of a collaborated effort with the Pacific Institute, which provides transformational education and cognitive thinking skills. The Institute made a commitment to assist South Los Angeles in reducing gang violence. This collaborative effort has the support of the USC Football Coach, Pete Carroll. There is a custody component attached to this program which focuses on the adult population called "New Directions to Success." The youth program is called "Pathways To Excellence." This program is considered a prevention and intervention program.

Lennox Integrated Network Collaborative For Services (LINCS)

The LINCS Program is a comprehensive school-based mentoring/counseling program. The female students receive mentoring from female deputies who serve as positive role models to provide guidance, counseling, and coaching. The mission is to prevent delinquency by empowering students and their families to deter at-risk youths from participating in gangs, criminal activity, drugs, or violent behavior. This is an intervention program that targets middle-school age females.

Project Stop (Strategies Tactics and Opportunities for Prevention)

The STOP Project is a collaborative effort of five agencies (Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County Probation Department, Lennox Middle School, and the Richstone Family Center) who are committed to utilizing suppression, intervention and prevention tactics to reduce gang activity and violence impacting at-risk youth. STOP Project targets elementary, middle school, and high school students.

Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)

Since 2000. Operation Safe Streets Bureau personnel have participated in a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to use the GREAT curriculum. The program is a partnership with school districts and educators. Thousands of middle school students have participated in four very successful summer programs. This curricula is designated to elevate the self-esteem of students and teach them how to deal with stresses of a gang environment.

These programs have received great attention from the communities in which they have been implemented. On August 30, 2006 Senator Diane Feinstein visited Lennox Middle School and observed Deputy Ray Bercini teach a middle school class using the GREAT and Pacific Institute curriculums. Senator Feinstein commended how impresse she was with Deputy Bercini and his presentation.

STATEMENT OF JERALD CAVITT

Mr. CAVITT. Yes. Good morning. My name is Jerald Cavitt. I thank everybody for allowing us here on this conversation that has to be dealt with. Too many heads being turned. Maybe happening in the wrong areas and wrong neighborhoods makes it all right. These guns don't pop up in Beverly Hills like this, Bel Aire. For some reason we can shake a gun trail in South Central LA, this gun trail that leaves a trail of bodies every day.

My name is Jerald Cavitt and I was born here. I got involved in gangs at the age of 15 in the early 1970's, maybe 1970. Went to prison and came back after doing a nice choke in prison. I knew that something different had to happen. With that I became involved in this work effort. With intervention and prevention we save lives every day.

Our kids are the next gang members. We save them first but we must put the fires out along the way. We put fires out every day. Every day there is a trail of bodies. Just in the surrounding city is the worst but it is across the country, almost across the world. We have Bloods and Crips and 18th Streets, Matavillas all over.

I want to say a couple of things before I go on here. I work full-time trying to return and restore peace to the city. Today I represent the hardcore gang intervention specialists and the work we do to handle gang violence. For 2 years I have worked for Unity T.W.O., a gang prevention and hardcore gang intervention group.

Unity T.W.O. is part of the Unity Collaborative, which is made up of the following groups: Unity One, Unity T.W.O., Unity Three, Venice 2000, JUSH, Unity Two Chapter Two, and Toberman House. We work with all the other gang intervention agencies that work this city. Everybody does a lot of work.

We work under the LA Bridges program. We've got a collab leadership that we help structure from a level above the work that is being done.

We have Tony Massengale, Bill Martinez and Howard Uller that helps us do this. We work out of South Central or wherever we must go. Sometimes we must tell the parents that the kids won't make it home today.

I work in schools. The high schools are not the worst. The middle schools carry weapons. We keep hearing weapons here on these panels that Congresswoman Watson brought up. We keep hearing weapons of gang members at high school level, middle school level with guns. Is that too easily accessible? Is it overflow? Is something wrong with that picture here and abroad now that we can't seem to do anything about that just goes on and on and on and on?

We also have a committee called the Cease Fire Committee, which was formed from the best of the Unity Collab. We formed this committee of a non-profit organization and we work together to stop gang violence and promote positive social change. Our primary mission is to obtain a cease-fire and maintain a cease-fire between rival urban gangs.

I am proud to say that I have founded Unity Two Chapter Two as a part of the collab which will provide assistance and peace among the Crips and the Bloods. The plan is to establish a nationwide communication line to talk to gang members all over the

world that are interested in sharing their ideas for promoting peace all over the world.

This gang violence started here in Los Angeles and we of the Collab and Cease Fire Committee intend to fix it here. With these issues resolved locally, we can spread our actions across the world to stop the violence.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Cavitt, if you could start to summarize. You are over your time limit.

Mr. CAVITT. OK.

Mr. SOUDER. You can summarize it.

Mr. CAVITT. OK. Right away. We had a breakfast recently and we had a breakfast over 18 rival gangs that shoot at each other every day, that kill each other every day. We did mediation work and last week we got them all to a table at a breakfast. They came in the name of wanting to hear peace. Some of them are just tired of what is going on. Some of them want the better for the communities at large. If we don't stop this now, then we have no future later.

With a combined effort with suppression and gang intervention, and not only suppression being the only ones with 100 percent of funding and gang intervention 25 percent of the funding that sounds like is just enough to fail. We have no intentions on failing and we will not fail. We will work closely with law enforcement. Law enforcement in the communities can vouch for the things that we do.

We deal hand in hand with activities and the peacemaking process. Right here with local law enforcement, LAPD and the Sheriff, we can and will bring this problem to an end with resources that can be given to us because we fight our war in Iraq every day and we don't speak of the war that is going on right here in South Central LA every day. Thank you very much for your time.

Mr. SOUDER. Ms. Scott.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cavitt follows:]

Testimony of Jerald "Pee" Cavitt

Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Relations

Hearing on "Combating Youth Violence: What Federal, State and Local Governments are doing to Deter Youth Crime".

Los Angeles, California
October 3rd, 2006

Good Morning to you all.

My name is Jerald Cavitt. I thank you and am honored to be able to speak to you today.

I was born, grew up and still live in South Central Los Angeles. I became involved in gangs at the age of 15 at the beginning of the Crip and Blood disputes in the early 1970's.

I am a former gang member, and I have knowledge of this area from the streets, the neighborhoods, the prisons and the intervention work that is being done. I am known as "Pee Pee" in the neighborhoods.

I am currently a peacemaker. I work full time to turn things around and restore peace to the streets.

Today I represent the hard core gang intervention specialists and the work we do to handle gang violence.

For two years I have worked for Unity T.W.O., a gang prevention and hard core gang intervention group.

Unity T.W.O. is part of the **Unity Collaborative** which is made up of the following groups : Unity One, Unity T.W.O, Unity Three, Venice 2000, KUSH from Watts, Unity Two Chapter Two, and Toberman House who are doing the work under contract with the Los Angeles Bridges program sponsored by the City of Los Angeles Bridges Two program of hard core gang intervention.

Unity Collaborative is headed by Tony Massengale, Bill Martinez and Howard Uller. I want to thank Kenyatta Weaver. Jacqueline Lynn Horton and Anna Ortega from the Los Angeles Community Development Department for their help and support of Gang Intervention and prevention programs. I would also like to thank Nancy Pomerantz from Criminon International for her help.

From some of the best of the Unity Collaborative, we formed a **Cease Fire Committee**, a group of non-profit organizations who work together to stop gang violence and promote positive social change. Our primary mission is to obtain a "Cease Fire" and maintain a "Cease Fire" between rival urban gangs.

I am proud to say that I have founded Unity Two Chapter Two as part of the collaborative, which will provide assistance and peace among the Crips and Bloods. The plan is to establish a nation wide communication line to talk to gang members all over the world that are interested in sharing their ideas for promoting peace.

This gang violence started here in Los Angeles, and we of the Collaborative and Cease Fire Committee, intend to fix it here. With the issues resolved locally, we can spread our actions across the world to stop the violence.

We go out in the neighborhoods at war and find the right shot callers (or Generals or people in charge) among the neighborhoods. The right ones that are tired of what is going on, or just don't want it anymore. Then we do our mediation. If possible we bring both sides of the table together to get the shooting stopped and **STOP THE KILLING**. After this we then work on resolving issues between them. Cease Fire must be allowed to stop the killing on a broad level.

Last week "Cease Fire Committee" held its second breakfast with 250 representatives of over 18 rival gangs successfully. We worked with law enforcement and the event was peaceful with agreement to stop the killing. You will find a copy of the program attached for your review.

We are not talking about the war in Iraq, we need to talk about the war right here in Los Angeles and across the country. Suppression is not winning the war in Iraq and alone won't win the war here at home. A joint effort between suppression, law enforcement and Gang Intervention in the Community will positively make this work.

However, you can't fund suppression 100% and fund less than 25% of what is needed to gang intervention and prevention to fix this problem. **We are undermanned and underpaid or not paid at all.**

Please do not just provide enough money for intervention and prevention to fail. We do not want to fail and we will not fail at this. Your help is needed so we don't.

Suppression alone is not the solution. No one can fix this problem for us. This problem of violence and senseless killings must be fixed as well from the inside out and we must build even stronger organizations that do prevention. We know we have a problem here. We need your help to **let us fix it**.

Law enforcement and suppression staff are on the clock. We, as hard core gang interventionists are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We do this because people get killed at any time of the day or night.

In the case of the Cease Fire Committee, not one 15 cents has been given to us and we work the neighborhoods day and night as volunteers because we must stop the killings.

We know it is up to us to do the work to make this happen. We need your help to be able to do this.

To explain what we do, I have attached just a few examples of incident reports that the gang intervention staff file regularly. These reports were filed by me.

We use these reports to go and help the families. We use them in the neighborhoods to know where we have a problem. When we don't know there is a problem we can't fix it. We go through past reports to find potential hot spots, to find where fires have been put out and to keep them out, and to know where we need to watch for future fires.

We find neighborhoods we know are hot spots, or will become hot spots and figure out who is the best to go in there. It may be another intervention agency, our agency or a member of Cease Fire. These people go into the fire to help as best they can to put out the fire, or keep it from spreading.

We work hand in hand with Latinos to assist in Latino problems as well as work together to help resolve any Black Brown issues. We network via cell phones or walkie- talkies that allow us to contact the community representative that we know has the ability or authority to stop or reduce gang violence in a given incident or in a neighborhood.

If you hear that intervention and prevention is not working or doing their job, I ask you to find out from the person who said this, what desk are they sitting behind. We are in places where these people can't be and won't be. We have to be in the neighborhoods to do the work, in places where others cannot go and others cannot create peace.

No one keeps statistics on lives saved, or on violence or fires prevented.

I want you to think about what the neighborhoods would be like, what violence would be happening if we weren't doing our jobs.

Think about how much we could do to stop the killing if we had more support.

Thank you for listening.

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN REGINA SCOTT

Ms. SCOTT. Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and speak on behalf of the Los Angeles Police Department about this very important issue of combating youth violence. The LAPD shares the committee's concerns about this troubling problem and we hope today by discussing these issues that we will develop some effective solutions that will have a lasting impact on the problem.

For LAPD gang violence is the single most important problem that we are facing in this city. The problem of crime and violence among our youth are directly connected to the affiliation, association, influence, and direct involvement of gang activity. For us to have any meaningful or lasting impact on combating youth violence we have to find a way to commit our collective resources to significantly reduce, if not eradicate, gang violence and the negative influence that gang members have on our youth.

To be effective, these programs have to include public safety, which we are willing to be there for, but you can't do it with just public safety if you don't have education and you don't grab those families, and you don't provide them with employment in the intercity. In the intercity there is practically no safe haven for our youth.

I mean, the police officers get there and they tell them, "Hey, you've got to leave," but where do these kids go? Every part of the city is infested with some type of gang activity. Our schools are not safe. Our parks are not safe. Our residential communities are not safe. Then we even have to question that some of these kids are not even safe in their own home and we understand that.

I am going to give you some data here that will help you shed a light on the problem that we face but then the overwhelming thing that LAPD has to face every day. In just LA's intercity we have 700 violent gangs that have been documented and we estimate about 60,000, and this is 60,000 that we have documented, gang members are in the city of Los Angeles. If you will include the associates, the affiliates, the gang wannabes, you can almost quadruple that number.

Now, you take that number and you realize in all of LAPD we have a little bit over 300 gang officers to deal with that problem. In just my area alone we have about 6,000 gang members that are documented. If you take that I employ about 24 gang officers to deal with that problem, we are putting a band-aid on a sore that is cancer and it is not working and we understand that and we recognize that.

If you look at it, approximately year to date right now 21,472 juveniles have been arrested for various criminal offenses. Year to date we have had about 4,000 drive-by shootings and of those 4,000, 1,600 victims have been actually shot in the head. Year to date we have lost 356 souls to homicide and of those 356, 167 of them are gang related. That is about 50 percent of all homicides are gang related.

Just in the South Los Angeles area 72 of them are accredited to us.

It talks about parolees and what Mr. Trejo talked about. There are 35,000 parolees in the city. That's 35,000 people that went to

jail and are out on parole for some criminal event. About 50 percent of those are just in the intercity of Los Angeles. There are 3,400, approximately, juveniles that are in juvenile hall or in California youth camp. As he said, that is preparatory for prison.

We have about 20,000 juveniles who are currently right now being supervised by the Los Angeles County Probation Department. What we realize here today as LAPD is we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. We look at that and LAPD along with the Sheriff we do have youth programs that help to prevent that. We have our LAPD Explorers. We have Safe Passage in our schools where we collaborate with the community.

We have an LAPD Jeopardy but we only have 404 youth in that program and of those 404 youth, only eight of them are in the south area. We have the Los Angeles Police Activities, PAL. We have about 1,500 kids in that. If you look at that, in South Los Angeles we have a hard time getting the kids in the small amount of programs that we have. We have initiatives in safer cities.

We realize Baldwin Village in that area was just a safe haven for crime and we went in there with an initiative of safe haven looking at other entities or other initiatives throughout the city and we put in resources. We were able to fix that problem. I am proud to say, and also sad to say, that since we went in there since this year we had not had a murder in Baldwin Village until a couple of weeks ago when we lost Kaitlyn, the 3-year-old who was shot in a gang-related type incident.

We have a collaborative which we are really proud to say we are working with the Urban League to try to hit those four elements that I talked about: public safety, education, housing, and employment with the Urban League. We will be bringing that out shortly.

Gang intervention. I sit here today at the table with Jerald and one of the things I have to say about Operation South Bureau, we realize that we can't do this by ourselves. What we have done is we have a coordinated effort to ensure that the officers assigned to our gang units work closely with the school police and our gang intervention groups to help reduce involvement in juvenile gangs.

Now, I am sitting here and I am thinking if you had asked me 5 years ago when I was in law enforcement would we ever work with gang intervention, ex-gang members? I would tell you no way. We have the solution. We will just put them in jail. But today I am proud to say that one of our success stories is the King Day Parade. We went to that King Day Parade with red and blue, seas of red and blue, and we had no incidents. The reason why is because we could refer to our gang intervention and they handled that problem.

The collaborative that we are trying to build——

Mr. SOUDER. Ms. Scott, you need to come to a summary here, too. We are going to put your full statements in the record and any additional materials.

Ms. SCOTT. I just want to mention the gang intervention collaboratives because although they are not snitches, they don't come to us and tell us who is doing who, but they come to us and say, "Better look at the 40's. Look at the 30's. There may be a problem, Captain Scott." We say, "Help us." They go out underground, undercover, and they bring them together and they help. That is

something that we couldn't reach. We could tell them all day long to stop shooting and killing each other, but they need to reach out amongst themselves to do that.

I just want to recognize Unity One and Amer-I-Can, the Los Angeles Civil Rights Association, A Place Called Home, Community Build-A-Safe-Passage Program, and the Unity Collaborative—2nd Call, Unity One, Two, and Three—initiatives on that. Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you for your testimony.

I want to say to each of the witnesses, too, that I have been giving just a little over. I am trying to keep it roughly even. I know and appreciate your passion and probably each of you could do a couple hours here. We have a time agreement to adjourn at 12:30 and I know Mr. Isaac said he has a 12:15 appointment but that is why I am trying to keep it moving. I apologize because I know you all are very passionate. We want to make sure everything gets in the record.

Ms. Jordan.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Scott follows:]

WRITTEN STATEMENT

OF

CAPTAIN REGINA SCOTT
COMMANDING OFFICER
SOUTHWEST PATROL DIVISION

ON BEHALF OF

THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

REGARDING

COMBATING YOUTH VIOLENCE: WHAT FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING TO DETER YOUTH CRIME

PRESENTED ON

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2006, AT 10:00 AM

AT

FIRST AME (FAME) RENAISSANCE CENTER
1968 WEST ADAMS BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES, CA

Chairman Souder, Ranking Member Watson, and other Honorable Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to speak to you, on behalf of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), about the very important issue of "Combating Youth Violence: What Federal, State, and Local Governments Are Doing to Deter Youth Crime." The LAPD shares the Committee's concerns about this troubling problem, and it is our hope that by discussing the issue at this level, we will eventually develop some effective solutions that will have a lasting impact on this problem.

It is the position of the LAPD that, in terms of criminal activities, gang violence is the single most important problem facing this City at this time. The problem of crime and violence among our youths is inextricably bound to the affiliation, association, influence, and/or direct involvement in gang activities. It therefore follows, that for us to have any meaningful or lasting impact on combating youth violence, we have to find a way to commit our collective resources and time to projects/programs that have the potential to significantly reduce, if not eradicate, gang violence, and the negative influence that gang members have on our youths. To be effective, these projects/programs must be focused on the schools (especially from middle to high schools) and families, particularly in the inner city communities, where lives and social environment of young Black and Hispanic men are dominated, associated, or otherwise influenced by violence or gang activities.

The challenge of combating youth crime has become more acute by the complexity of the problem. There are practically no safe havens for our youths: they are exposed to (and influenced by) gang activities in every crevice of the City. The schools are not safe, the parks are not safe, the residential communities are not safe, and there are questions as to whether our youths are even safe in their own homes. The following data may help to shed some light on why the problem has become so overwhelming:

- There are over 700 violent street gangs in the Los Angeles area, with an estimated membership of over 60,000 (add associates, affiliates, and "wanna-bees" gang members, and this number could easily quadruple. A significant number, if not the majority, of these gang members are also between the ages of 12 and 18).
- Last year (2005), approximately 26, 353 juveniles were arrested for various criminal offenses in the City of Los Angeles. So far this year (up to September 15, 2006), approximately 21, 472 juveniles have been arrested for various criminal offenses citywide.
- Year to date (September 23, 2006), there have been 3, 891 incidents of shots fired (the vast majority are gang-related), and 1,584 incidents where a victim was shot.
- Year to date (September 23, 2006), there have been 356 homicides in the City of Los Angeles (this compares to 362 for the same period in 2005).

One of the most alarming trends is the fact that there is an increasing number of juveniles (both as victims and suspects) who are involved in most of the reported violent crimes and gang-related crimes citywide. Based upon reports from other police agencies across the country, it is believed that this trend is nationwide.

To address the issue of youth violence and to deter youth crime, the LAPD has engaged in a number of department sponsored and other collaborative programs that are geared towards the prevention/intervention of juvenile involvement in crime and gang activity. The following are some of the youth programs in which LAPD personnel are involved on a citywide basis:

1. LAPD JEOPARDY PROGRAM

Jeopardy is a gang prevention/intervention program, which is designed for boys and girls ages 8 through 17 and their parents. Jeopardy uses a positive approach designed to change the attitudes and behavior of the children in our community. The program combines the strength of the community, schools and the police department in making positive, lifelong attitude changes in the young people living within each police geographical area. These changes, we believe, will result in a more positive self-concept for the youth as well as having a positive impact on the community.

The steps to this program include the following:

A. Identify the children that need help.
B. Notify their parents and hold a family interview.
C. Families are referred to local community counseling agencies.
D. Monthly family seminars are held.
E. Alternative activities are offered and selected by each child.
F. The children are monitored monthly for at least one year.

2. POLICE ACTIVITIES LEAGUE (PAL)

The PAL is a recreation-oriented juvenile crime prevention program that relies heavily upon athletics and recreational activities to create and cement the bond between the police officers and the kids on the street. PAL is based on the strong belief that children, if they are reached early enough, can develop a strong positive attitude towards police officers in their journey through life towards the goal of adulthood and good citizenship. The PAL program brings youngsters under supervision and constructive influence of a responsible law enforcement agency and expands public awareness about the role of a police officer. That role is reinforcement and support of the responsible values and attitudes instilled in young people.

The Mission of the PAL Program is:

- To provide quality activities for the youth of our community
- To provide youth with focus and direction to become responsible citizens
- To establish positive relationships between youths, police and community

Activities involved in the PAL Program include:

- Baseball/Football
- Basketball/Softball
- Field Trips (fishing, snow trips, etc)
- Tutoring (and other academic-related after-school activities)

3. THE YOUTH ADVOCACY PROGRAM (YAP)

In 1990, the youth Advocacy Program (YAP) was designed to form an early intervention system, which would refer qualifying at-risk youth and their families to referral agencies, offering treatment and counseling programs with the goal of reducing criminal activities and reducing the number of youth entering the juvenile justice system. When referred to the program, the youth is required to attend a total of 15 counseling sessions which consist of individual, family, and group session. After the completion of the program, the youth and the family members are expected to voluntarily continue with counseling.

The eligible youth group is as follows:

A. The youth must be between 13 and 17 years of age
B. Non-violent offenders
C. Youths who are at risk of becoming involved in criminal behavior
D. Youths in possession of, using, or selling drugs
E. Youths bringing weapons to school
F. Youths with inconsistent school attendance

4. CITY ATTORNEY'S PARENTING PROGRAM (CAPP)

In September 1989, the City Attorney's Office implemented CAPP in response to the street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention (STEP) Act of 1988. Under the STEP Act, California Penal Code (PC) Section 272 was amended to impose upon parents or legal guardians of minors under age 18, a specific duty to exercise reasonable care, supervision, protection, and control over their minor child.

While declaring that parents have a legal responsibility to discourage their children from committing crimes, the legislation provides that no mother, father, or guardian (hereon referred to as parents) who actively tries to exercise parental control can be prosecuted under the STEP Act. Moreover, it provides that parents of habitually delinquent juveniles, who previously neglected their parental responsibility, could avoid prosecution by voluntarily enrolling in a program which teaches parenting skills. However, parents who willfully avoid their parenting responsibilities can be prosecuted. The STEP Act created the need for a program which would provide for quality parenting or allow for prosecution when appropriate. To meet this need, the City Attorney's Office developed CAPP.

The Procedures provides that if at any time during a contact with a juvenile and/or the parents of a juvenile, the investigating (police) officer forms the opinion that the parents are in need of parting education, a referral of the parents should be made to the CAPP Administrator. A CAPP referral is mandatory for all parents of juveniles who have been arrested and referred to the YAP. With the receipt of the referral form and supporting documents by the CAPP Administrator, the parents of the minor are contacted and notified to appear at the City Attorney branch office nearest to their residence and meet with a City Attorney hearing Officer. The hearing officer will assess all aspects of the case and either excuse the parents or, if appropriate, enroll them in a parenting education program.

In addition to the Department sponsored prevention/intervention programs, many geographical police areas are involved in a variety of other programs and collaborative initiatives with community groups and community based organizations. In most cases, these collaborative efforts are geared at preventing crime and violence in the respective communities, with emphasis on preventing juveniles from becoming involved in gangs and criminal activities.

GANG INTERVENTION

In Operations- South Bureau for example, there is a coordinated effort to ensure that officers assigned to gang units (The Gang Enforcement Detail) work closely with school police and gang intervention groups to reduce the involvement of juveniles in gang activities. In some cases, these collaborative efforts have resulted in gang members acting as mediators between rival gangs to prevent disruption of public events (such as the Annual Martin Luther King Day Parade). The collaborative efforts between police officers and gang intervention groups have also resulted in the forging (and lasting) truce (and cease fire) between rival gangs (prior to the truce/cease fire, these gangs were responsible for a significant number of the shootings and homicides in Operations-South Bureau).

Some of the gang intervention groups and community based organizations that have worked with the police to reduce crime and violence in the community, and to combat youth violence/deter youth crime (especially South Los Angeles) are:

- Unity One and Amer-I-Can
- The Los Angeles Civil Rights Association
- A Place Called Home
- Community Build – A Safe Passage Program
- The Unity Collaborative (2nd Call, Unity One, Two, and Three)

CONCLUSION

The Los Angeles Police Department will continue in its effort to work with Federal, State, local agencies, and community groups/organizations to combat youth violence and deter youth crime. However, our efforts can be enhanced (as I am sure that the efforts of the community based organizations and gang intervention groups can be enhanced also) with the increased financial assistance from the Federal Government. Some of the things that can be done to enhance our collective efforts are as follows:

- Provide annual budgetary funds to support legitimate gang intervention programs
- Give LAPD management authority over the funds allocated for Operation Weed and Seed and Project Safe Neighborhoods programs (funds for these programs are dispersed by the Office of the US Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs)
- Provide a grant fund (or increase existing funding) that would be dedicated to officers working on an overtime basis to specifically address the issue of youth violence and gang intervention/prevention activities
- Provide funding to create (or support the creation of) a local, State, or Federal Government department, which would have the specific responsibility to manage programs that address the social, economic, and environmental factors that are mostly associated with gang violence, especially in inner city communities.

STATEMENT OF CHARLOTTE JORDAN

Ms. JORDAN. Good morning. Thank you for inviting us to this very important issue. My name is Charlotte Austin Jordan. I am the founder of Mothers on the March and Save our Future. I can directly tell you what violence will do to you. I had a 13-year-old daughter, Jamee Finney. In 1988 she was shot 15 times. Fifteen times. My son in 1996 was shot by a 41-year-old gang member.

My family, my immediate family has lost 14 children under the age of 21. That is one family. One grandmother. I was put in this fight not by choice. I was forced in it. I have been out here for 18 years or better. Mothers are part of the solution. We live it, we think it, we sleep it, we eat it. We sit on a daily basis trying to figure out what happened to our child, how did this happen, how could it happen, how did we allow it to happen, and we come out with real solutions.

Los Angeles Police Department recognized the importance of mothers at this table. I am going to say one thing. Every last one of us in here have one thing in common. We have a mother. Our mothers are important in this battle. They can unite. I have been myself in the presence through my charter school in front of a 17-year-old young man trying to shoot another one. Because I was in his face and begging him not to shoot that gun, he was trying to shoot around me saying, "Ma'am, please move." He wanted to shoot that child, but because I was there he gave me enough respect. You need to help us. These young men at the table, these organizations, it's not going to come from your FBI. Like law enforcement said, they can't do it themselves. It is going to take the community.

It is going to take mothers who have these children and in Los Angeles it is not uncommon to have a mother to have a child in prison for murder and one in the graveyard, so we know from both ends. When you are looking to find out about a bullet wound, how does it feel to be shot, you don't go and ask a person how does it feel who has been stabbed. We can tell you. We can tell you from just sitting and thinking, working with the collaboratives.

We build the collaborative. Eighteen years there has been programs that came in, got funded, walked out the door. Guess what? Project Cry No More, Mothers on the March, Stevies, Justice for Murdered Children, Drive-by Agony have been here. We are not going away. For you guys today you go home and you forget about this. For me tonight I go home and pray that I don't dream about my children. I had a birthday just a few weeks ago and I was sad. I should have been celebrating because so many don't make it but I wanted to see my children.

I wanted to see my children. But nothing can stop us. These mothers are here. We are asking whatever we can do. We get respect. We get the ear of those children. We get the ear of our husbands. We need your ear. We need your help. Funding is needed. Eighteen years and no one has funded us. Guess what? We are still here and we're not going. Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Isaacs.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jordan follows:]

Save Our Future
Mothers On the March

History:

Mother On the March (M.O.M.) is a project of Save Our Future which is a non-profit organization providing resource services to the community, founded by Charlotte Austin-Jordan in 1992 after the violent lost of her daughter (Jamee, age 13). M.O.M. was founded in 2002, by grieving mothers collaborating with local law enforcement and various community non-profit organizations. Mothers who recognized, those victims and their families needed support services after experiencing the loss of a loved one, Mother who experienced the trauma of losing a child were comforted by those with similar experiences and as a group they began a healing process that brought closure, peace of mind and transition for returning to the workforce. Though peace marches and rallies, MO.M.began to build community awareness, encouraging community involvement and creating nonviolent solution relevant to their neighborhoods.

Mission Statement:

Mothers On the March bring together mother and families, who have lost sons, daughters, close relatives or friends due to violent crimes, The purpose of Mother On the March is to support grieving person(s) in their healing process and create a positive impact on neighborhoods in Greater Los Angeles Areas.

Objectives:

- Create a community collaborative model involving local churches, mother and families,
- Community based organizations, health institutions, local police department (Newton, 77th, Southwest, Rampart), criminal justice institution and the private sector.
- Insert Faith Based awareness.
- Increase community participation of local mothers to prevent violence-related deaths through dialogues, marches, rallies, workshops and presentation.
- Provide mothers and family members who have lost a love one positive interventions and support.

Problem Statement:

On a whole, individual person are not naturally inclined to violence. Community violence is environmentally induced, reinforced though entertainment and domestically practiced by parents who are unable to teach children the basic social skills necessary for becoming healthy, productive citizens. Daily, we see and hear messages of increased violent crime in LosAngeless County which has caused the community to be paralyzed by fear and pain. Therefore, the general community does not participate in addressing negative activities such as violence, drugs, theft, the destruction of property and many other anti-social displays. This has created more work for law enforcement with very little community leads and involvement. Because law enforcement and the criminal justice system are overworked, they are exploring solutions (other then suppression and incarceration) with faith institutions and community based organizations. It is clear that no one entity can resolve the violent or community faces.

Mothers feel helpless due to the violence plaguing our streets and causing the loss of a loved one. While seeking solutions other that bearing arms for protection, they struggle with the fear of who will be the next victim and the despair of wondering when the violence will ease up or when it will stop. Even those mother who are ready to stand up to the violence, struggle with the issue of how they can help. M.O.M. is the new "space" in which mothers and their families can address the fear, despair, and pain: while building solution that provides them with an avenue to help the community addresses violence. Historically, "spaces" for victim services in the community have been loosely organized to address individual and small group needs.

Collaborative Partner:

There is a huge need to create a sustainable infrastructure in the local community to deliver on the wide range of needed victim services from a community perspective. At present, the Office of Victims Services is the only major institution to provides assistants for burial expenses, but because is lemonted cannot provide and other necessary services.

Traditional leadership in Los Angeles has overlooked the power of faith-and Community-based institution. We have extended an initiative that is a strategic partnership between, and lad by, Faith and community based organization that invite the traditional institutions to the table with us. M.O.M has brooded its 5th annually March, with four prior years of success in community involvement and resourceful communication. The M.O.M Partnership is as followed;

- Save Our Future (SOF)
- Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles (VPCLA)
- Amazing Grace Ministries and International Outreach
- N.O.G.U.N.S. (Gang Prevention)
- Volunteers in Parole Inc. (V.I.P)
- Minors Day Care Habilitative (Minor DCH)_

Funding Sources

M.O.M continues seeking funds through varies fundraisers such as; car washes, community fish fry, candy sales, Fashion Show, and donated yard sales. Additional to M.O.M fundraisers, several private donors such as; Mr. & Mrs. William Cosby -$10,000, Ms. Pauline Cooper $12.000, OVC Outreach Program (Hope Grant), and Northrop Grumman- $13,500. Within January 04-December 04, combine with fundraisers and private donations, under $40.000.00 was raised.

Description of Activities and Crime Victims Services

Save our Future (SOF) - is a non-profit community based organization that works with youth and families providing;

- Education
- Prevention services
- Meeting space for M.O.M. to organize and develop strategic action plans
- To Mothers organize and mobilize the community

Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angles (VPCLA) – is a project of the Los Angles County Department of Health Services that has a multi-sector membership addressing violence prevention through the County. VPCLA is a partner in this initiative that provided access to:

- Community resources and data through the mapping of Geographic Information Services (GIS)
- Media
- Leadership development
- Community organization forums
- Evidence-based research
- Evaluation and sustainability tools
- Policy advocacy for the city and county

H.E.L.P. Ministries Fellowship – who ministries centers on community healing, from extreme depravity of dysfunctional social abusive, providing;

- Healing circles for those grieving
- Victims services
- Offers a neutral, spiritual, safe space for mothers to meet
- Parenting classes
- A campaign (as a neutral community entity) for community members to safely turn in weapons (guns, knives, etc.)for submission to the police department with no question asked

Mount Sinai Mental Services – is a mental health program working with all family members providing;

- Primary health services – pregnancy, parenting…
- Mental health services – counseling
- Substance abuse services – detoxification…
- Assessment and referral services – social services support

Volunteers In Parole Inc. (V.I.P) – works with the California State Bar, California Youth Authority and the California Department of Corrections… Provides services to address

- Recidivism
- Re-entry
- Mentoring
- Voting initiative
- Job training
- Employment placement

N.O.G.U.N.S. Gang Intervention – are specialists who provide:

- Educate parents of identifying gang behavior
- A response team to violence at the street level
- Assistance to families regarding unsolved murders
- Intervention with gangs from a community perspective that traditional law enforcement cannot so with their suppression methodologies
- Support peace
- Spread positive messages about this initiative on the streets to create community ownership

Drive-By Agony
S.T.E.V.I.E
Project Cry No More
Justice For Murder Children

Statement of Need:

Mother On the March has been inquiring upon solutions, such as one available place of meeting (home- based) to organize, recruit, provide individual and group counseling (adult and children), a place able to express their lost openly. Supportive services are painfully needed; Save Our Future had offered the use of its facility, collaborating with M.O.M. to meet its objectives, such as;

- Case progress (Police detective update of victim)

- Community resource (burial, financial resource, etc.)
- Identified personal needs (substance abuse, group family counseling)
- Assisting with media (information on marches)
- Exploring resource available through coalition community – based organization and other partner agencies.

The final external option available to M.O.M. is arranging for direct provision of the supportive services and linking with all the local Law Enforcement agencies, forming a community collaboration expressing intervention and prevention. M.O.M. would like to have from each police station, two representatives (one officer, one victim coordinator), having meeting with M.O.M. Board members.

In order for M.O.M. to meet its objectives effectively, communication of our mission and services must be enhanced through program literature, newsletter, and recruitment of volunteers. M.O.M. Must reach out the community, but funds are limited. Some victims are unable to benefit from our services due to transportation, child care, or lack of information of services. M.O.M. has a successful history in providing information to the victims of crime and the community, through negative impact of violence in the community.

The purpose is to continue planning collaborative marches in each designated police station areas, which will be "M.O.M 5TH Annual March". The march will encourage community to communicate with law enforcement, providing leads for unsolved murders, promote peace, and inform drug dealers, killers, taggers and others anti- social involvement in our community is no longer accepted.

M.O.M. / Save Our Future is very aware the budget in our law enforcement, we would like to add our voices and energy, lobbying legislation for sounder laws, and increase funding for law enforcement. Our plans are to open doors with Los Angeles Police Department for collaborative funding accessibility, for special projects that will provide significant solutions in the violent crimes. This plan is to create victims with a pro-active involvement and receive closure from their lost.

We've asked that each police station, to partners in duplicating flyers and any other assisting informing the community of the march, M.O.M. and Save Our Future know the importance of community wellness; only through common unity can we make a change.

Information booths, presented by government and local agencies will play an important role, proving directions to assist the needs of victims and their families. T- Shirts and hats are needed to reflect the mission of MOM.

MOM will support the victims of violent crimes, and the community to work toward securing, a safe and crime free place to raise their children and enjoy being with friends. Victims of violent crimes must be given resources to restore their faith, and pride in their community. Many of the day to day, needed services are available within the community because they are provided by local, talented residents. M.O.M marches and its resources

are very important for victims and their families, linking effective community communication for closure and positive resolve.

MOM has recruited well-trained and highly motivated mothers and community advocates who will use their healing and clarity to build new relationship of acceptance, understanding, and values that must be practiced to build a safer and stronger community.

STATEMENT OF DAN ISAACS

Mr. ISAACS. Thank you, Chairman Souder, Congresswoman Watson. I would be remiss if I didn't express our appreciation for the years and actual decades of support that Congresswoman Watson has provided our school system.

I am a graduate of LA Unified. So is my wife and so are my two kids. We believe very strongly in public education. Los Angeles Unified School District has many initiatives in place that address the issue of safety on our campuses. Rather than focusing on youth violence, we commit ourselves to ensuring that our campuses remain safe havens for our students and staff.

For example, in the city of Los Angeles in 2004 the primary crime rate per 1,000 was 36.4 occurrences, whereas within the LAUSD the crime rate was 3.3 occurrences per 1,000 students and employees. Our schools are far safer than any community in which they are located.

LAUSD has its own School Police Department made up of over 600 sworn and civilian personnel including in excess of 300 police officers. During the past year the department responded to 62,356 calls for service; issued 30,000 plus parking and traffic citations around schools impacting traffic safety; filed over 13,000 criminal/arrest reports related to students or staff from LAUSD. We share all of these reports with our police department, LAPD, as well as the Sheriffs and other neighboring city police agencies.

Thirteen hundred crimes were investigated against students and staff. We obtained $468,000 in restitution judgments; coordinated and facilitated 2,000 students obtaining clothing and supplies at Operation School Bell; mentored almost 1,500 students in the Police Activities League and the Junior Police Academy Programs; developed and implemented and maintained safe school collaborative partnerships; successfully managed and resolved several major campus demonstrations and protests involving thousands of student without serious injury.

The District is unique in the establishment of a Youth Relations and Crime Prevention Unit. This unit does not provide security services, per se; yet contributes dramatically to maintaining an environment conducive to learning. It is comprised of 16 Youth Relations Assistants plus one Coordinator. The staff members are utilized at schools throughout the city based on need.

Their goals are to promote good human relations and positive intergroup activities between students. They work closely with the city and county Human Relations Commissions, Department of Justice, s well as the Probation Department. Youth Relations Assistants have developed an exemplary human relations program known as HEART, Human Efforts at Relating Together.

Another unit which focuses on safety is the Crisis Counseling and Intervention Unit. It has several proactive initiatives as well as being galvanized when there is a traumatic event which impacts our schools. Its main functions are to create and execute the District-wide Crisis Team training, conduct threat assessment training for District staff members, and provide crisis intervention training to all of our local districts and, in turn, their staff.

Some of our key safety initiatives over the past 2 years include $9.3 million which our superintendent and our board authorized to

increase the number of campus aide positions to provide supervision on our secondary campuses from before school until after the end of the school day. These aides receive 24 hours of training from our own school police department.

Doubled the Youth Relations and Crime Prevention staff which I referenced earlier. We have initiated a collaborative safety working group composed of representatives from LAPD, our own school district, City Attorney, State Attorney General, Probation Department, Housing Authority, MTA, LA Mayor's office, County Office of Education and others which have undertaken a number of tasks in a collaborative fashion to make our schools safer.

For example, 10 school mapping, assessment and action plan based upon school community crime data so we can determine where it is safe and where it is unsafe both within the school community and on the way to school and on the way home from school.

Moving of MTA bus stops that are heavily utilized by students to more secure locations nearer to the school sites. Collaborative efforts between the city, county and district to address specific school safety measures such as designating all schools as Safe School Zones under Penal Code 626 where our city attorney has enhanced penalties if a crime is committed within 1,000 feet of any of our school sites.

All of our LAUSD crime reports are shared with LAPD and other police agencies. We have an emphasis on the use of portable metal detectors at secondary school sites and renewed training and distribution of a CD to help reinforce the training at the school site. We have requested our principals to meet with students in their classrooms to address the values of diversity, racial tolerance, multi-ethnic sensitivity and the means to settle disputes in a nonviolent fashion.

We have installed additional safety enhancements at key schools such as security fencing, dense shrubbery, surveillance cameras, and an increase of night lighting. We have a District Parent Handbook which is issued to every parent and student in all of the languages spoken within the LAUSD. I have a sample here for the committee if they wish.

Fifty-eight of our secondary schools have a probation officer assigned to the school sites. We have a large number of Violence Prevention/Human Relations Programs that are currently in place at our school sites. Let me just mention a few. We have a Second Step Program which is a K through 8 violence prevention curriculum. We have Youth Relations HEART Program, which I mentioned earlier. We have LA Bridges. We have a program with Rampart Division of the LAPD Middle School Intervention Project at selected middle schools. We have Youth Lead gang intervention program at selected middle schools. We participate in the Los Angeles County Interagency Gang Task Force.

This year we have initiated a priority staffing program to ensure that schools with the greatest need have fully credentialed teachers and all positions are filled including a judicial stable substitute force at each of these schools. We have a focus on selected high and middle schools to address immediate facilities and staffing issues.

Let me just close, if I may, by quoting some statistics which reflect a decrease in crime from the 2004/2005 school to the most re-

cent school year that has closed, 2005/2006. We have a decrease of assaults with a deadly weapon in excess of 11 percent; decrease in batteries by almost 5 percent; decrease in homicides by 75 percent; decreased bomb threats almost 38 percent; decreased robberies by 20 percent; decreased sex offenses by almost 22 percent; decreased criminal threats by 16 percent; decreased threats against school employees by 42 percent; decreased arsons a little over 6 percent; decreased burglaries by 20 percent; decreased thefts by 25 percent; and, decreased incidents of vandalism by almost 6 percent.

Our opinion is that it is critical to reduce the plethora of weapons that are found in this community and create an environment that is much more difficult for our students to act as weapons. Obviously we are looking to all of our collaborative agencies with whom we work to enhance our safe passages and our safe quarters to and from school. Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Now Mr. Eddie Jones.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Isaacs follows:]

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ROY ROMER
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Written Testimony
On behalf of the
Los Angeles Unified School District

For the hearing on
Combating Youth Violence:
What Federal, State and Local Governments are Doing to Deter Youth Crime

Submitted to the Government Reform Committee's
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources

Dan M. Isaacs
Chief Operating Officer
September 28, 2006

The Los Angeles Unified School District has many initiatives in place that address the issue of safety on our campuses. Rather than focusing on youth violence, we commit ourselves to ensuring that our campuses remain safe havens for students and staff. One of our basic tenets as a District is that all students have a right to attend campuses that are safe, secure and conducive to learning. While schools are in fact, a microcosm of the communities in which they are located, statistics show that they tend to be among the safest places in the community. For example, in the city of Los Angeles in 2004 the crime rate per 1000 was 36.4 occurrences, whereas within the LAUSD, the crime rate was 3.3 occurrences per 1000 students and employees (approximately 1 million people in total).

The LAUSD has its own School Police Department made up of over 600 sworn and civilian personnel, including more than 370 police officers. The difference between a school police department and a municipal police agency is on the focus. Whereas municipal departments focus on crime, the school police department can focus on not only the physical safety of the campuses, but also on ensuring that students learn the values of respecting themselves, their classmates and adults and the property of others. The long range goal for the District is to staff every high school with at least 2 police officers and each middle school with one. However, at this time School Police Officers are assigned to secondary schools based on crime statistics, school size, campus location and community crime factors. School Safety Officers (non-sworn personnel) are assigned based on the same information and may be funded separately by a school site. Approximately 40 officers are on patrol in fully outfitted police vehicles daily to provide services to elementary and middle schools and other sites that do not have a campus based officer. School Police Officers spend 20 weeks in a police academy then 22 weeks in field training positions and School Safety Officers receive 40 hours of training by School Police before reporting to a school site.

The strategic goals for the Department for 2006-2007 are to:

- Improve Campus Safety.
- Create a safe and tranquil school environment, free from the fear of crime.
- Protect and enhance the quality of life for all students and staff who travel to, work at, or visit our schools by delivering the highest quality of public safety services.
- Create safe passageways to and from schools.
- Improve customer service partnerships with the students, staff, and community of the LAUSD.
- Impact student learning.

During the last fiscal year the LASPD directly impacted student/staff safety in the following ways:

- Responded to 62,356 calls for service for LAUSD student/staff related issues.
- Issued 30,896 parking and traffic citations around schools impacting traffic safety.
- Filed 13,002 criminal/arrest reports for LAUSD student/staff related issues. All reports are shared with and entered into LAPD's database
- Investigated 1,300 crimes against students and staff.
- Obtained $468,000 in restitution judgments (900% increase).

- Coordinated and facilitated 2,000 students obtaining clothing and supplies at Operation School Bell (OSB).
- Conducted parent first aid, safety, and drug/gang awareness courses for 740 parents (185 families).
- Mentored 1,440 students in the Police Activities League (PAL) and the Junior Police Academy Programs.
- Developed, implemented and maintained safe school collaborative partnerships.
- Successfully resolved several major campus walkouts, student demonstrations, and protests involving thousands of students.

The District is unique in the establishment of a Youth Relations and Crime Prevention Unit. This Unit does not provide security services, per se; yet contributes dramatically to maintaining an environment conducive to learning. It is comprised of 16 Youth Relations Assistants plus one Coordinator and Secretary. The staff members are utilized at schools throughout the city, based on need. Their goals are to promote good human relations and positive intergroup activities between students and they work closely with the City and County Human Relations Commissions, the Department of Justice, and the Probation Department. Youth Relations Assistants have developed an exemplary human relations program known as HEART—Human Efforts at Relating Together. This program is active on several middle and high school campuses and contributes to maintaining a safe environment.

Another unit which focuses on safety is the Crisis Counseling and Intervention Unit. It has several proactive initiatives as well as being galvanized when there is a traumatic event which impacts our schools. Its main functions are to:

- Create and execute the Districtwide Crisis Team training
- Secure and manage grants related to improving mental health of students
- Conduct threat assessment training for District staff members
- Provide crisis counseling and intervention support
- Develop with OEHS school safety, violence prevention and emergency preparedness materials
- Provide crisis intervention training to Local Districts

The Crisis Counseling and Intervention Unit works hand-in-hand with the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Units. The units have full complements of psychiatric social workers, physicians, nurses and other mental health professionals who work with students and their families.

Some of the key safety initiatives of the last two years are:

- $4.3 million was allocated to provide 133 six- hour campus aide positions to our secondary schools
- Implementation of a $.9 million grant which will provide 30 additional School Police Officers
- Doubled the Youth Relations and Crime Prevention staff, which serves a critical role in student mediation programs and working with the community
- The initiation of a collaborative safety working group, composed of representatives from LAPD, LASD, City Attorney, State Attorney General, Probation Department, Housing

Authority, MTA, LA Mayor's office, County Office of Education and others, which has undertaken a number of tasks to make our schools safer. For example—

a) 10 school mapping, assessment and action plan based upon school community crime data
b) Moving of MTA bus stops that are heavily utilized by students to more secure locations nearer to the school sites
c) Collaborative efforts between the City, County and District to address specific school safety measures, such as designating all schools as Safe School Zones under Penal Code 626
d) 22 schools have local safety collaboratives composed of local agencies that deal directly with that site

- All of LAUSD crime reports are shared with LAPD
- An enhanced working relationship with the City and County Human Relations Commissions and reestablishment of the LAUSD Office of Human Relations
- Emphasis on the use of portable metal detectors at secondary school sites—Renewed training and distribution of a training CD
- A request to principals to meet with students in their classrooms to address racial tolerance, multi-ethnic sensitivity and the means to settle disputes in nonviolent ways
- Installation of additional safety enhancements at key schools, i.e., security fencing, dense shrubbery, surveillance cameras, increased night lighting.
- The issuance of the District's Parent Student Handbook to every parent and student which includes mandate information regarding discipline infractions, the District's commitment to respectful treatment of all persons, anti-discrimination statements and student complaint procedures.
- 58 secondary schools have a probation officer assigned to each site
- The development of a Districtwide student behavior policy
- A large number of Violence Prevention/Human Relations Programs that are currently in place on school sites:

a) Life Skills for the 21st Century (6th and 9th grade course)
b) Second Step Program (K-8 violence prevention curriculum)
c) Youth Relations Heart Program (Human Efforts at Relating Together-a proactive student mediation program)
d) Safe School Ambassadors
e) LA Bridges 1 (Gang prevention and early intervention collaboration with LA City, currently at 27 middle schools)
f) LA Bridges 2 (Focuses on hardcore gang members ages 14 through 24 and accesses services from agencies and community based organizations)
g) Gang Resistance Education and Training (middle school gang intervention program)
h) Rampart Division LAPD Middle School Intervention Project (at selected middle schools)
i) Youth Lead gang intervention program (at selected middle schools)

- Participation in Los Angeles County Interagency Gang Task Force
- Priority staffing program to insure that schools open with filled teaching positions and a stable substitute staff
- Focus on selected high and middle schools to address immediate facilities and staffing issues, thereby enhancing the environment for learning

- 24 hour training for campus aides
- Districtwide theme, "Live Violence Free," stranded in activities throughout the school year
- Our environmental safety program, which includes annual school safety inspections and published ratings, has been adopted by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and is being used as a national model.
- Valley Youth Summit established Blue Ribbon Committees to promote positive human relations
- $5 million was allocated this year to increase secondary campus aides from 3 or 6 hours/day to 8 hours per day with 24 hours of training and uniform
- Body armor for our School Safety Officers (non-sworn personnel)

California state regulations require that school districts maintain a climate on campus, I classrooms and at school-sponsored events and require the preparation of comprehensive safe school plans. Safe school plans deal with violence prevention, emergency preparedness, hate crimes, crisis intervention and student and employee safety and must comply with the principles of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Every school in the LAUSD must submit an up-to-date safe school plan each year. This plan is to be developed by the school site council or safety planning committee and be relevant to the needs and resources of that particular school. The safe school plan must identify appropriate strategies and programs that will promote school safety and address the school's procedures for complying with existing laws related to school safety, such as:

- Child abuse reporting procedures
- Disaster procedures
- Suspension and expulsion recommendations
- Procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils
- Sexual harassment policy
- Provisions of any school wide dress code
- Procedures for safe ingress and egress
- Safe and orderly environment
- Rules and procedures on school discipline

To assist schools administrators in addressing these requirements, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety has developed a template for a Model Safe School Plan. It is issued in two volumes: Volume 1—Prevention Programs; and Volume 2—Emergency Procedures. In this manner, we are assured that each school site has made the necessary preparations and implemented appropriate procedures to facilitate a safe and secure environment that is conducive to learning. In addition it ensures that should an emergency occur, schools are appropriately prepared. These safe school plans must be reviewed quarterly and updated annually.

Beyond the Bell is the District's division that is devoted to after school and weekend enrichment, academic and sports programs. Through the myriad programs that Beyond the Bell offers, virtually every elementary and middle school student can avail themselves of a safe place with interesting activities which they can attend after school. While parents embrace the Beyond the Bell activities as a safe, extended day care program, staff views them as opportunities to ensure that students remain safe and supervised until at least 6:00 pm every day while receiving

academic support and enrichment activities. On many campuses, these programs operate during the summer months and provide meals for students.

Another area for consideration when looking at the safety umbrella is interscholastic athletics. It is critical that staff members insure the safety of students and spectators as they participate in athletics and attend athletic events. Administrators have a manual which identifies appropriate responsibilities related the athletic safety. When considering appropriate supervisory and police personnel at an event, several factors must be considered, such as:

- Number of spectators expected
- Past rivalry
- Recent neighborhood problems
- Time of game
- Egress of buses from stadium
- Campus Officers' recommendation

While any crime committed in or near a school site is unacceptable, the LAUSD remains committed to providing safe environments for students and staff. We are proud that our increasing test scores are reflective of efforts which ensure that students and staff feel comfortable and secure at school and therefore able to concentrate on their academic achievement. Our proactive, preventative strategies have resulted in several decreases in crimes on school sites in the past two years. Some examples are:

- Decreased assaults with deadly weapons by 11.36%
- Decreased batteries by 4.81%
- Decreased homicides by 75%
- Decreased bomb threats by 37.93%
- Decreased robberies by 20.26%
- Decreased sex offenses by 21.77%
- Decreased criminal threats by 16.11%
- Decreased threats against school employees by 42.11%
- Decreased arsons by 6.35%
- Decreased burglaries by 20.18%
- Decreased thefts by 25.11%
- Decreased incidents of vandalism by 5.74%

STATEMENT OF EDDIE JONES

Mr. JONES. My name is Eddie Jones, President of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Association. We have a bad cancer in our community and we are trying to find ways to cure this cancer. This cancer is shooting, killing, stabbing, beating, harassment—physical and verbal—and is very, very heated in South Central Los Angeles. I am hoping and praying each day that Congress will maybe look at a program that I have been looking at that used to be called the Team Post a long time ago. It was a great after-school program for kids.

I was a product of the Team Post. Rather than reinvent the wheel, I thought about calling it the Basic Training Center for Life Skills for Youth. In this building, that I'm sure the Government has funds to fund, you put a classroom environment which has a library, law library, medical library, whatever type of books these young people want to read. It has a theater, it has a basketball court, pool table.

Then on the other side it has the basic training side just like they have in the military. You have the tires and you have the wall with the ropes. You have all the exercise apparatuses and everything for the kids to learn. You have computers and technology so they can advance their minds and maybe even a media center inside the Basic Training Center for Life Skills for Youth. I think it would be uplifting, motivating.

It would give the kids dignity. It would give them self-worth. Not only that, it will teach them a lot about respect and honor. A lot of our older people in the community are afraid to walk to the store. They are afraid to walk their dogs at the park. They are afraid to walk down the street after a certain hour. That is not the way it should be. It should be that we all should be able to walk and talk and share with one another in our community.

No matter if you live on this side of the street or the other side of the street, we all have something in common; we are human beings. When we wake up in the morning we have to wash our face and brush our teeth all the same, but we can't do it if we have to walk outside and be worried about, "Where are you from? From city are you from?" It is intimidating to be asked a question, "Where are you from?"

A lot of kids want to go to school, but a lot are afraid to go to school because they don't want to be asked that question. A lot of parents are so afraid with all these school shootings and all these shootings in the community. I can't name alone how many candlelight vigils I have went to myself and other organizations.

Recently here with the 3-year-old myself along with the LAPD and all the other organizations, Unity One, Ministry Tony, Herb Wesson. Everybody was there at the press conference. I wish that would have been a press conference for the Basic Training Center for Life Skills, not a press conference for a 3-year-old that was shot and a father that was laying there almost dead and the doctors don't want to tell him that his daughter is dead because that might kill him just finding out that his daughter is dead. How terrible is that?

The four young boys that were shot on Central with AK–47s in front of their house out there just playing. How in the world does

an AK–47, and I mean they have taken a lot of them off of our streets, 9 millimeters, 380's, Desert Eagles, Glocks, Glock 17, Glock 18, Glock 19. All these weapons are on our streets and they have lots of ammo.

This botox store, which I had a privilege to work with Congresswoman Watson on, this botox store is a serious situation. If something goes down in our community or if the wrong people get in there and get those guns out of there and they are just sitting there and, trust me, these G's, like back in the day they called them G Men, that was the FBI, but these G Men are gangsters. They know what they are doing.

They know how to get those guns. If they really want to get them, they shouldn't be in South Central Los Angeles because if they were in Beverly Hills or in the Valley or anywhere like that, the people would fight and that gangster would have been gone a long time ago.

We have a very, very serious fight here. We can't do it by ourselves. I thank Congresswoman Watson because she is putting her heart, her life, her soul into this fight to stop this gang problem that is plaguing mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and the entire community.

Today I leave with you this. On behalf of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Association I want to thank Honorable Diane Watson and other members of the congressional committee for holding hearings on the crucial life and death issue of gangs and gun violence in our inner cities. This is a deeply troubling issue that I have devoted my time and energy to for the past 5 years.

I just want to say in closing if you think about this Basic Training Life Center for kids, for young people, when they get out of school, instead of seeing them hanging on the corner and throwing up signs to each other because I can't tell you how many shootings I have been to myself, how many funerals I have went to. I didn't know the kids but I felt like they were mine because each one teach one. It takes a village to raise a child. I get phone calls at 3 in the morning. I cry like a baby.

I thank God for Skip Johnson. Where are you, Skip? He is the Gang Intervention, Unity One, and he keeps me up on what is going on in the community along with Unity Two and other organizations that are out here fighting this problem. We cannot do it by ourselves. We need the Government. We need the President of the United States to allow funds to come in for us to build after-school programs that will help these kids stay alive. Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Our next witness is Rev. Oden. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jones follows:]

Statement of Eddie Jones
President Los Angeles Civil Rights Association

On behalf of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Assn., I want to thank the Honorable Diane Watson and other members of this Congressional Committee for holding hearings on the crucial, life and death issue of gang and gun violence in inner city communities. This is a deeply troubling issue that I have devoted my time and energy for the past five years grappling with. I am convinced that there are three crucial things that are needed to reduce the carnage in our neighborhoods. The first is a comprehensive jobs and skills training program for our youth to provide them with meaningful employment.
The second is a curb and crackdown on the free flow of automatic weapons in our communities. The third is encouraging greater involvement and intervention by church, community organizations, parent groups and educators in giving guidance and direction to young persons.
I have proposed the creation of a multipurpose Basic Life Training Skills Center. This would involve the groups and parents I mentioned in providing and supporting job training, computer skills, recreational facilities, and parenting skill programs. I applaud this committee in its efforts to curb youth violence and encourage you to strongly consider my proposals. Thank You

Recent Anti-Violence Actions of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Assn.:

2004-2006
Coordinated three forums on gang violence and prevention
Campaigned successfully for a cross walk to reduce accidents to young persons following the accidental motor death of Demaria Grant
Led anti-violence walks and candlelight vigils following the murders of three young men on Central Avenue and the murder of Ashley Ceval
Anti-violence vigil following the murder of three year-old Katyln Avila.

STATEMENT OF REV. DR. CLYDE W. ODEN

Rev. ODEN. Thank you and good morning to the Honorable Mark Souder, chairman, and to Congressperson Diane Watson. It is a privilege to be able to present this morning.

I am the Senior Pastor of Bryant Temple A.M.E. Church located here in South Los Angeles, as well as a founding member of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention. I want to share with you the summary of the work that we have done over the last 3 years.

The full testimony has been presented to you so I am just going to deal with the highlights. The fact is that we came together some 3 years ago when Kerman Maddox had challenged our community to stop just wringing our hands about the problems but began looking at solutions for the problems. We had a 2-day summit meeting at USC to begin looking at a number of those issues.

Several hundred African American leaders, parents, and activists joined together to begin that important conversation. Since then the summit has had door-to-door survey of the community in which we talked directly with the community. We have had workshops. We have conducted workshops. We have participated in cultural forums. We tried to make certain that we could hear many of the voices of the African American community. What we have come up with is this.

No. 1, our community very much wants to see this problem resolved but the problem is greater than just the African American community. There is a culture of violence that is part of America and until we admit it ourselves, we are in a state of denial the same way the White House is in a state of denial with respect to the war in Iraq.

The problem of violence is not just a young people problem. It is not just a problem of African Americans. It is not just a problem of people of color. It is a problem of all of America. There could be no peace without social, economic, and political justice. Let me say that again. There can be no peace without social, economic, and political justice and that is where we ultimately have to be.

In my prepared remarks there are 24 recommendations that we have that we think are important in order to change the culture of violence that we have. It begins with our school system, which touches every one of our young people. We have to admit that the LA Unified School District has failed our children. When we have a 50 percent dropout rate of our young men after the 9th grade, that is a problem because they drop out from school and then going off to the streets and then to the prisons. Something has to be done about that.

Something has to be done about the curriculum because there needs to be persons who are, in fact, involved in trying to change things. They need to talk to the young people in the schools in terms of a curriculum of prevention so that our young people can hear and see and feel that is going on. There is nothing more impactful than to have a mother stand before you and say, "Look, my child has died as a result of violence."

This is no fun thing. This is no game and that needs to be said. There needs to be community survival training sessions so our young people as well as our adults can understand how to survive

the streets of Los Angeles. There needs to be more organized forums for youth and parents around the issues of personal responsibility and violence prevention.

Our foster care system needs to be overhauled. Within 24 months of the emancipation from a foster care program more than three-fourths of the young people that come out of the program are then involved in the criminal justice system. We are training our young people in the wrong way.

Our street intervention specialists are valuable resources. There needs to be more resources available, more funding for those persons who are specialized in getting out into the streets and getting out into the alleys and getting out into the nitty-gritty of our community. We need to support more mentoring programs directed at African American youth in particular.

It takes a man to teach a man. Our young people don't understand what it is until they have a role model. We need to promote role models. We need to also have more community forums for racial dialog and not pretend like it don't exist in terms of problems between black and brown youth and black and brown folk in our community. We have to have conversations about that.

We also have to promote more role modeling for both our young men and young women. We also have to teach our faith-based communities how to have more effective programs. We cannot say just because we are a faith-based church or organization that we know what the best practices are. We need to promote what is working out there and there are many churches and faith-based organizations that really want to get involved.

Then we have to deal with diversion of our young people away from the court systems. We sent too many of our young people to those basic training courses for the university of prisons. We need to keep them outside of the prison system. Then, finally, we need to make certain that our families have some place to call when they have a young person in crisis.

Right now who do you call? Who do you call if you have a young person who needs to talk to somebody? There are no resources now. There needs to be resources. All 24 of our recommendations we provided to you in terms of testimony. We thank you for the opportunity to share. We thank Congresswoman Watson for her leadership that she has given to our community for a long time. Thank you so very much and God bless you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. I know Mr. Isaacs needs to go and anybody else who needs to. We have added one additional witness, somebody who is almost as well known as Congresswoman Watson. Will the Rev. Jesse Jackson please come forward. Whether you are a cabinet member or whoever, everybody needs to be sworn in in an oversight committee so if you will raise your hand.

[Witness sworn.]

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you for being willing to speak on this important subject. I look forward to hearing your words.

[The prepared statement of Rev. Oden follows:]

African American Summit on Violence Prevention, Inc.
2525 W. Vernon Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90008
323-754-8074

October 3, 2006

Testimony to the House of Representative's Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

TO: Honorable Mark E. Souder, Chairman, and Members of the Committee

Good Morning. I am the Rev. Dr. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., Senior Pastor of Bryant Temple A.M.E. Church and a founding member of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention, Inc. (AASVP). I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on the important topic of combating youth violence. This morning my testimony is informed by the important work that is being done by the **African American Summit on Violence Prevention, Inc.** Dr. Stanley Viltz is the Chairwomen of our Board of Directors.

The African American Summit on Violence Prevention, Inc. is a nonprofit community organization formed in response to the tragic epidemic of violence that has characterized South Los Angeles. We started nearly three years ago as a result of a major conference convened in Los Angeles by Kerman Maddox, a college instructor, community activist and political commentator.

From his own experiences Mr. Maddox declared: "enough is enough!" Mr. Maddox had experienced personally how violence had taken the life of one of his most promising college students, Lee Denmon, a young man who had done all the "right things." The murdered student was not part of a gang, but was murdered, like so many others, senselessly. Mr. Maddox challenged the African American community to meet and develop strategies and solutions to the problems of violence that has impacted our community.

In early 2004, a two day summit meeting was held and that resulted in an organization being formed to formalize and initiate many of the constructive recommendations that surfaced at the summit.

Several hundred African American leaders, parents, activists and young persons had responded to the challenge by Mr. Maddox, with constructive ideas, programs, plans and approaches to the issue of violence reduction. AASVP was created to advance these recommendations, plans, programs and solutions before the African American and larger community.

When the Summit was created as an organization its mission statement was:

The mission of the African American Summit on Violence Prevention is to eradicate causative factors and promote solutions to the problem of violence in the Black community.

Over the last 30 months, AASVP has also pursued a number of approaches, programs and activities that permitted its leaders to hear even more clearly the voices of the African American community. The array of activities included:

1. Door to door in the African American community to survey residents on issues of violence and violence prevention.
2. AASVP conducted community forums to discuss the results of surveys with community residents.
3. Conducted workshops on survival strategies in conjunction with Maximum Force Enterprises, Inc.
4. Held a community retreat to develop a specific strategic plan for the community.
5. Participated in community cultural events like Malcolm X Festival;
6. Met with middle school and high school students to hear their recommendations for violence prevention.
7. Listening to street level gang intervention specialists;
8. Met with law enforcement leadership on their perspective on violence prevention; and
9. Sponsored a community breakfast to present to the community the results of the work of the Summit.

Today it is my responsibility to provide this committee many of the solutions that are advocated by AASVP as a result of nearly 3 years of research and engagement in the African American community in South Los Angeles.

To reduce violence in the African American community and in this society, there must be a comprehensive approach with short term, medium term and long term solutions. The problem of violence is not just a problem of and by young people. The problem of violence is not just of and by African Americans. The problem of violence is not just a problem of communities of color. The problem of violence is an American problem.

Key to the implementation of all strategies is this basic principle:

There can be no peace without social, economic and political justice; and violence ultimately is an expression of hopelessness by people who feel or believe that they are powerless to change their personal, social, economic or political situation.

The valuing of human life must be promoted and understood both **inside and outside** of the African American community. The national promotion of wars, advocacy of death penalties, promotion of video games of violence, promotion of CDs that glorifying violence, an irresponsible entertainment media which profits from violence promotion and social degradation, the societal tolerance of poverty, the profiting nature of illicit drug sales, the proliferation of handguns and military style weapons in the civilian population and the failure of the public educational systems all are important contributors to a culture of violence.

SPECIFIC GOALS, PLANS AND STRATEGIES PROMOTED BY AASVP

1. Education: The public educational system in Los Angeles is a failure. There must be a radical overhaul of the public educational system. There must be significant improvements in dropout rates, college admission rates and employment rates for high school students.

2. Establish "violence prevention programs" as part of curriculum in elementary, middle and high schools. This would include classes on conflict resolution and personal responsibility.

3. Provide community survival training sessions for youth and community residents in general. The focus of community survival training is to provide a context reducing the number of victims of acts of violence in the community.

4. Organize forums with youth and parents around the issues of personal responsibility for violence prevention.

5. The foster care program in Los Angeles County needs radical overhaul. There are too many children being raised outside of the home of biological relatives. An overwhelming number of young people who reach the age of maturity through the foster care programs in Los Angeles County are caught up in the criminal justice system within 24 months leaving the program.

    a. Create a community based board for monitoring foster care program and requiring a public report on the status of foster children in Los Angeles County.
    b. Provide special mentoring programs for young people in foster care programs with a focus on those in high school and nearing emancipation.
    c. Develop special work-study program for high school age children in foster care.
    d. Increase effort at re-uniting foster care children with parent and extended family members.
    e. Encourage linkages of children in foster care with faith based and other value based institutions.

6. Street Intervention Programs are extremely important in reaching at risk young people and adults involved in gang lifestyles. Street/gang intervention programs need to have increased funding. Additionally what is need is:
    a. Training and certification programs for street/gang interventionist;
    b. Development of regional and county-wide forums for coordination and development of best practices; and the modeling of mediation of racial strife and discord.
    c. Create a forum for street intervention organizations to coordinate their activities with one another.

7. Supporting and promoting mentoring programs directed at African American Youth.
    a. Identifying current mentoring programs by social organizations, fraternal organizations and faith-based organizations.
    b. Developing programs for increasing the number of volunteers – with a special focus on male volunteers.

8. Developing community forums for racial dialogue: focused at both adults and youth. The forums should be conducted throughout the community and would involve schools, churches and houses of worship, and law enforcement personnel.

   The purpose of the forums is to promote an atmosphere and environment for problem solving social, economic and political issues before they hit the boiling points.

9. Significant increases in the promoting youth and young adult athletic programs
   a. Increasing youth recreational programs
   b. Promoting of team sports in the community

10. Promote and expand existing male and female role modeling programs
    a. Rites of Passage programs
    b. Mentoring programs such as "See a Man, be a Man" and Princes to Queen" programs

11. Promotion of after school programs to include every school in which the graduation rate is below the statewide averages.

    a. The goal should be to have all school aged students creatively involved in cultural, academic and athletic programs after the regular school day.
    b. Best practice promotion – develop a program for critically looking at successful programs and then promoting them for expansion

12. Mentoring faith-based organizations and social agencies on how to focus more relevant programs on youth and young adult members of the community. There would be the promotion of and the dissemination of information about successful programs.
    a. Encouraging regional gathering of faith-based and social agencies to share ideas and resources on programs that work in reaching at risk youth and young adults.
    b. Providing resources for grant writing and organizational development to promote more successful programs.

10. Development of crisis response teams that could:
    Provide intervention for families looking for immediate help when young people are being pressured into gangs;

Providing intervention in "hot situations" where resources could be called to help quell situations such as school fights or other situations without the direct intervention of law enforcement personnel. This includes having 24 hour crisis hotlines available.

13. Positive diversion of youth away from court systems.

    a. Parenting programs provided by local faith-based institutions and social agencies for families (parent and youth) in which the youth has been arrested for non-violent crimes. The mandatory participation would be the alternative to youth being sent to youth correctional facilities.

    b. Youth intervention programs for young people that have been referred by their families for more intensive support and counseling.

14. Support for increased community-based public safety programs and officers with new training components:

    a. Community based training for public safety officers which include curriculum developed by community based agencies and participation by agencies in cadet training
    b. Development of new programs for developing public safety training programs for young people in sites away from police and fire stations
        1. Increase recruitment programs for African American candidates for public safety; and

        2. Increase programs for candidate preparation for public safety.

15. Promotion for the expansion of Block Club programs. Every neighborhood should have organized block club programs.

16. Hotline and helpline numbers for families to call for immediate intervention with children who are at high risks.

17. Creation of community forums for honest and open dialogue with the leadership of law enforcement leadership which would occur on a scheduled basis – before major community crisis develops.

18. Promotion of community based grief and pastoral counseling care programs.

Many young people and their families are suffering from Post Traumatic Shock Syndrome because of the violence that has visited their homes. Pastors and other social agents should be trained to refer such cases to community based care programs designed to address the issues of grief. There are also too few professionals available to provide appropriate counseling both in the schools and in the community.

19. Expanding of domestic violence housing and programs – especially for families with school aged children. There is an under-funding of domestic violence programs and a lack of placement opportunities for families with school aged children and youth.

20. Promotion of faith-based support programs for parenting grandparents. A significant number of African American grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Support programs to assist grandparents in this difficult task need to be developed and promoted.

21. Promotion of employment programs for youth and young adults with arrest records and the eliminating, wherever possible the barriers to employment by those with prior convictions.

    a. Tax incentive programs for companies hiring youth from neighborhoods impacted greatest by violence, and grants to non-profit agencies to encourage the hiring of young persons in and not in school and young adults with criminal pasts.
    b. AASVP supports the efforts of having job and apprentice set-aside for publicly funded construction programs that will give priority of hiring young persons from low income neighborhoods.

22. Increasing the number of work study programs for college bound youth. Increasing college enrollment for African American males and females must remain a high priority.

23. Responsible Media involvement in reporting issue of violence.

    The news media often misreports and sensationalizes stories involving youth, violence and conflicts within the community.
    a) Development of standards for reporting issues of violence in the community such that media outlets would be held accountable for irresponsible reporting of violence issues in the community.
    b) Proving the media with credible spokespersons related to issues of violence in the community. Currently the media is quick to interview persons who are experts in sound bites but not in accurately reflecting on community issues.

24. A credible source for "rumor control."
    a. There needs to be a publicly supported Website for reporting accurate information related to issues of violence and conflicts within the community.

    b. Rumors have often created problems that could be overcome if there were credible sites with good information.

CONCLUSION

These recommendations are not directed at any one level of government. The addressing of violence in our society is a responsibility for the public and private sectors. Prevention of violence must include providing positive options for young people. This is the best investment our society can make.

The problem of violence cannot be solved through the arresting of more young people and the building of more jails and prisons. It can only be solved with a comprehensive prevention approach that includes providing a major voice to communities most affected by violence and by listening to and engaging young people who most live daily with the consequences of violence.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF REV. JESSE JACKSON

Rev. JACKSON. Let me express my sincere thanks to Congresswoman Watson for giving us this platform of giving us the chance to express ourselves and for the testimonies I have heard already today. If I close my eyes I am in Kansas City, I am in Newark, I am in Atlanta. As we fight this arm of the crisis, it is not unique to Los Angeles. We are facing the devastating impact of an abandoned urban policy.

Urban America has become the Valley of Death because of schemes of protracted genocide. We take various anecdotes or examples and act as if that is the problem or the solution. What do I mean by that, Sister Watson? I do not know of a gun shop in America owned by blacks. From LA to New York to Miami there is not a single black-owned gun shop in America or gun manufacturer. So where do the guns come from? Most cities ban the sale of guns, but the suburbs encircle the city with guns and make a profit off of the insurgents as it were. Make a profit off of bringing guns to where people kill and are killed, the flow of guns.

We use satellites in Iraq. We know where guns are manufactured, where they come from, and we stop the flow of guns. We stop the insurgency. We have lost about 3,000 soldiers in 3 years in Iraq. We lose about 26,000 a year at home. We know where the guns come from and so to use this military language let's stop the supply line of the insurgents.

You can't find a single ghetto in America that grows cocaine or heroin. We know the heroin comes from Afghanistan on the U.S. military occupation. We know that. We know the cocaine comes out of Colombia and Peru right down the Pan American Highway and is unloaded in Long Beach. We know that. We know where the guns and the drugs come from and who they prey upon and those victims at the caboose of that train end up in jails for profits now and in the street.

I would like to say three things. Since I have been here working the last 3 days, No. 1, All Saints Church is under attack for freedom of speech. It is not just All Saints. It is all labor organizations are now facing IRS investigations. All civil rights groups are facing IRS investigations not unlike Dr. King leading the cry in 1955, indicted by the IRS in 1957 for income tax evasion. The use of the Government to intimidate and try to nullify the free conscious of pulpits and labor and civil rights.

Last night we watched as they threatened to close the hospital. If you look at a certain geographic area and you cutoff job training, cutoff Section 8 housing, you reduce the school budget, you cut access to hospitals, you have, in a sense, engaged in the hemorrhaging and the slow death of those who live where the water is cutoff or where the blood is cutoff.

I guess my point is, (a) don't look at this issue through a keyhole but look at it through a door. It is a bigger issue. Some people are profiting from our misery. I would take this case, if I had to make a case, in the Valley of Dry Bones, and these bones are dry. At some point the bones have to get reconnected with a massive dose of unity and a will to fight to break the cycle of the killing.

The fact is that music and media has not given us a comfort zone in our death, in the pseudo-religious music of pop culture. We are

glorifying death to the generation. We are dancing our way to the graveyard and recycling a quality of life and lifestyle that is hemorrhaging us. I would make this case, Congresswoman, I don't know how many jobs it would take, just using, for example, in that area.

How many jobs are we short? I don't know what the number is but whether it is 20,000 or 12,000, we need to know (a) how many jobs we need. How much skill, trade, training do we need so we can build where we live? If they gave all of us a house, we couldn't fix the spigot because we are not trained to build where we live. If we need 27,000 jobs, whatever that figure is, if we need trade skill training in every high school, that is what we need. If we need computer trade training in every high school, that is what we need.

Then let us fight for what we need once we determine that. But I am finding in these ghettos around the country as I am traveling a combination of a rap sheet where you, in fact, need to be expunged, your record expunged. The combination of a rap sheet on the one hand and low credit score on the other and lower education on the other and unregistered voter you can't break out. You all follow me now?

A combination of low education, low registration, a rap record, and a low credit score you can't work your way out. Thus, we need a massive commitment, a massive plan. If the magic number is 27,000, and I don't know where that figure comes from, it could be 50,000, let us fight for what we want, not cry about what we don't have. Right now we are basically complaining about what we don't have and explaining, "Here is how I died. Here is how I got shot. Here is how I went to the funeral. Here is how my cousin got crippled. Here is how my uncle got killed."

We are describing how we are dying. We are not describing how we are going to live. So if the mail comes to us, if the Government comes to us, we have to be able to say what we want, what we are fighting for. We are describing how we are dying. We are not defining how we plan to live. I would make a case that we need to have a major dose of defining the content of our agenda.

We have never, Rev. Oden, fought about what we lost and we have never lost a battle that we fought. We never won one we didn't fight. One more time. We have never lost a battle that we fought. We fought slavery and we won that battle. We fought Jim Crow and we won that battle. We fought for women's right to vote and won that battle. We fought for workers right to organize and won that battle.

We have never fought a battle that we lost. We never won a battle that we didn't fight. Are we fighting for our share of jobs, job training, computer training? If we define what that number is, then we can rally around that number like Katrina. Our own tsunami. We have our own Katrina right here in South Central LA. Am I right about that? Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. Mr. Isaacs, I have some additional questions.

Congresswoman Watson, would you like to question?

Ms. WATSON. Yes. I just want to thank not only the panelists but the audience for coming here, for being patient, for remaining here, and for gathering the information that I hope you will take back to your neighborhood, your household, your loved ones. I want to

thank all the panelists who have spent their time to share with us their ideas, their actions. What we are going to do working through the Chair, I hope, is formulate some policies.

We know more now than we did before we came into this room. When you see this panel sitting here, the followup will be that we take this and we talk to ourselves as a committee and we have staff. May I say that I would like to thank your staff, Chairman Souder. Would they stand up, and my staff too. Just stand up. They will go back and they will process this information. We hope this will lead to some policy.

I would like to thank Bishop Bryan who is a presiding pre-lay for the 5th Episcopal District of the AME Church. I would like to thank Denise Hunter who is standing right over there at the wall who is president and CEO of F.A.M.E. Corp. Most of all, John Hunter, the senior pastor and CEO here at the F.A.M.E. Church Inc.

Michael, I see you there. Yes, thank you. And Rev. Lorna. Thank you so much, all of you. I think we have possibly a direction to go in. You heard from law enforcement. You heard from the FBI. You heard from gang members. You heard from former gang members. You heard from the Sheriff's Department. You heard from community organizations and you heard from one of the most renowned civil rights leaders that is recognized around the globe.

In closing, because I have to go on, Congressman, to the hearing that we are going to have with the Federal Communications Commission over at USC, the Davidson Center. You are all invited to come there. I want to say to you, Rev. Jesse Jackson, a group of us have been talking about a peace team. You, Bishop Tutu, and other renowned fighters for the rights of all people around this globe, to go to Darfur and to see if we can establish peace there. We are all emanating from that topic.

Homeland security means that we protect not the land but the people on the land. You have your history, your experience, your ideas, but most of all the vision. I would hope that you would commit to being on the team that can assist our Secretary of State in trying to bring some peace and stop the genocide of our brothers and sisters thousands of miles away and stop the internal genocide that is going on in our streets across this country.

With that I want to say thank you, all of you, the audience, the panelists, our chairman, Mr. Souder. This was something for you to bring the operation here and be patient to hear from all of us. I must make my exit. I am hosting the other meeting and it starts at 1. Thank you to all of you, staff, presenters, and audience.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. In conclusion, we will have your full statements in. We have some additional questions. I wanted to let you each at least get your say and I am sure you would have had much more. I have had to hear a couple of things I didn't want to hear today as a Notre Dame grad. I heard Pete Carroll's name and USC twice and that is really hard. I very much appreciate your passion, your commitment to this. We will continue to work together and it has been very helpful.

I think one of the important things about a hearing like this, even where we may not completely agree, I agree it is absolutely important that people in neighborhoods have the ability to speak

to their Government. Congresswoman Watson arranged this and this is very important for everyone to speak out.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, will you take under consideration the Basic Training center for Life Skills for Youth in the Community as an after-school program where kids can go when they get out of school?

Mr. SOUDER. I am on the Education Committee and we can look at the category and a particular grant would go through an individual Member of Congress.

Mr. JONES. You would save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you very much. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m. the subcommittee was adjourned.]