



DIANNE JACOB
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: March 22, 2005
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBJECT: WAGING THE FIGHT AGAINST EAST COUNTY GANGS (DISTRICT: 2)

SUMMARY:

Overview

Gang activity is on the rise in East County communities. Many residents are living in fear and law enforcement is being stretched to the limit. East County neighborhood gangs, such as the Murder Crew, the Dukes, Spring Valley Locos, Dego Wrecking Crew and Santee Originals, are not only actively recruiting new members, the crimes they commit are becoming increasingly violent. In 2004 alone, there were 13 gang related homicides in East County communities. The current level of East County gang enforcement staffing in the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office is being worn thin and faces the overwhelming challenge of handling the magnitude of the problem. Today's action will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to identify the necessary staffing and funding that will allow the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office to adequately handle the increased level of gang activity in East County, and report back to the Board within 60 days.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR JACOB:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, while working with the Sheriff's Department and the Probation Department, to identify the staffing level and funding needed for establishing an East County Gang Task Force, modeled after the North County Gang Task Force, and report back to the Board within 60 days.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, while working with the District Attorney's Office, to identify the staffing level and funding needed to effectively investigate and prosecute the growing number of gang related cases in East County, and report back to the Board within 60 days.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impact as a result of this action.

Business Impact Statement

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N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The plague of gang activity is nothing new to San Diego County or the rest of the Nation. The always present problem of gang activity in schools and neighborhoods seems to be increasingly discussed by residents, the media, law enforcement officers, public officials, community leaders and President Bush, who highlighted the dilemma of kids turning to gangs during his 2005 State of the Union Address.

Gang activity is on the rise in East County communities. Many residents are living in fear and law enforcement is being stretched to the limit. According to a recent report, there are 996 documented gang members within the Sheriff's jurisdiction. Unfortunately, these numbers don't include undocumented gang members who often do just as much harm to a community. East County neighborhood gangs, such as the Murder Crew, the Dukes, Spring Valley Locos, DeGo Wrecking Crew and Santee Originals, are not only actively recruiting new members, the crimes they commit are becoming increasingly violent. In 2004 alone, there were 13 gang related homicides in East County communities. In Spring Valley and Lemon Grove, assaults and robberies have significantly increased and in 2004, there were 7 gang homicides and 25 gang shootings. During 2003, the East County branch of the District Attorney's office prosecuted 20 cases against 25 defendants for gang related crimes, including homicide, attempted homicide, assault with a deadly weapon, possession of an illegal weapon and residential burglaries. However, since the District Attorney's Office only has 1 gang prosecutor in East County, East County gang cases are handled by other branches when the East County branch has reached its limit.

In response to the increase in gang violence, East County law enforcement agencies came together during a one-night gang sweep. On a Friday night in February, 20 two person teams from the Sheriff's Street Narcotics/ Gang Detail, the District Attorney's Office and other law enforcement agencies completed gang sweeps in the areas of Lemon Grove, La Presa, Spring Valley, and Casa De Oro. Upon completion of the detail, approximately 10 arrests were made for narcotics, probation violations, parole violations, and various other types of criminal activity. 15 citations were issued and 2 stolen vehicles were recovered. Unfortunately, after the completion of the gang sweep, there was a gang related shooting in Spring Valley that left one person dead and another with a gun shot wound.

Law enforcement hasn't been the only one to respond to the spread of gang violence in our communities. The Grossmont Union High School District along with myself, East County school districts, the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department, the District Attorney's Office and the City of El Cajon have formed a gang task force to tackle gang violence on our school campuses. Gangs are increasingly using schools and adjacent areas for intimidation, violence and recruitment. This task force was set up to share information and pursue initiatives that will reduce the threat of gangs to our children.

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Despite these recent efforts, the current level of East County gang enforcement staffing in the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office is being worn thin and faces the overwhelming challenge of handling the magnitude of the problem. During a recent meeting with the Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office and East County public officials, I learned there is additional staffing needed in order to effectively counter the increase in gang activity. Specifically, the addition of an East County Gang Task Force, modeled after the North County Gang Task Force, would make a significant impact on breaking apart gang organizations and reducing violent crime. The North County Gang Task Force includes County Departments and partner agencies from the local, State and Federal level. Arresting gang members is insufficient if there isn't the level of staffing needed to effectively prosecute these dangerous criminals. The East County branch of the District Attorney's office is simply overloaded. Action is needed to make sure that gang members are effectively prosecuted and quickly put behind bars.

Today's action will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to identify the necessary staffing and funding that will allow the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office to adequately handle the increased level of gang activity in East County, and report back to the Board within 60 days. I urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB
Supervisor, Second District

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
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COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
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Other Concurrence(s): N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 2

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____