

There is no issue that causes more fear than gang violence in our communities. This will be one of the deadliest years on record for Central Coast murders. If that doesn't jar state and local officials into greater action, nothing can.

Here in Washington, I'm doing my best to support the efforts of the Monterey County Sheriff's Department and the Salinas Police Department. Over the past two years, the federal government has provided nearly \$5 million for the operation of the Joint Gang Task Force and more than \$1 million for the Silver Star Gang Prevention and Intervention Program. We're on pace this year to contribute another \$1.25 million to the task force and \$350,000 to the Silver Star program.

Money, of course, cannot cure this disease. It will take effort by every member of the community. There is no simple solution. It will take a combination of enforcement AND prevention to address the gangs who have taken up residence here. We must patrol our streets, but we must also keep children from joining gangs in the first place.

I will continue to work with city and county officials to energize the public and get all stakeholders involved.

Prevention

Silver Star is the gang prevention and intervention component of the Monterey County Joint Gang Task force. The program's resource center is a collaboration of several community agencies offering a one-stop shop for children and young adults who need help in the areas of gang involvement, substance abuse, truancy, employment, mental health and family conflict.

The program provides counseling, educational and job preparation services and serves more than 3,000 minors each year. Through my work on the House Appropriations Committee, the program has received \$1.65 million over the past few years.

Enforcement

The Street Violence and Anti-Gang Project is the countywide task force that is working to quell gang violence. The task force was created in March 2005 and is made up of personnel from the Salinas Police Department; the Monterey County Sheriff's Department, Probation Department and District Attorney's office; and the California Highway Patrol. Working with my peers in the Senate, we have succeeded in securing more than \$5 million since 2005 for the program.

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