

MOTION

RULES & GOVERNMENT
MAY 16 2008

WHEREAS, the so called Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, is currently being circulated for signatures in order to be included on the November 2008 ballot; and

WHEREAS, California currently spends approximately twice as much more money on prisons than universities, leading the world in incarceration rates; and

WHEREAS, instead of investing in community-based solutions to crime and violence, this initiative will divert money from public schools to prisons; and

WHEREAS, California currently spends over 10 billion dollars in incarceration costs exceeding the 7.1 billion that the state spends on both the University of California budget and the Cal State University Education system combined, illustrating that the state is spending more on incarceration than on those education efforts; and

WHEREAS, this initiative would further cripple California's current budget crisis by spending an additional 1 billion dollars the first year and \$500 million every year after that on top of the ballooning 10 billion dollar prison budget; and

WHEREAS, it costs taxpayers \$46,000 dollars to incarcerate an adult, and according to some state officials it costs \$252,000 dollars to incarcerate a juvenile as compared to \$1200 - \$1300 dollars a year to keep one child in an intervention or prevention program and out of jail; and

WHEREAS, this initiative shifts California State General Fund monies to law enforcement and incarceration programming from other vital services proven to be effective and less expensive at reducing gang violence including education, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs; and

WHEREAS, this initiative would contribute to an already overcrowded prison system by increasing the number of youth tried as adults by creating the presumption that youth fourteen years or older are unfit for juvenile court; and

WHEREAS, this initiative would require the establishment of a statewide gang registry, a database that would wrongfully imprison many youth and young adults merely for their association with one another; and

WHEREAS, this initiative would force people in public housing to be subject to annual criminal background checks, subjecting people to lose their homes during a looming recession and rising unemployment; and

WHEREAS, this initiative would explicitly exclude those same community and mental health experts whose government needs help to make informed and wise decisions on how juvenile justice funds should be spent; and

WHEREAS, this initiative does not provide any funds for proven and effective prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs that reduce violence and criminal activity and cost much less than incarceration; and



08-1255

WHEREAS, many low income communities, including communities of color, need additional resources and opportunities for employment, recreation, and education that are known to steer youth and young adults away from criminal activity toward positive and healthy futures; and

WHEREAS, community members need more resources for programs that holistically and comprehensively address the root causes of gang violence rather than simply attacking those communities that do not have access to adequate resources and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in order to produce safe and healthy communities, we must invest in education, and we must ensure that people have access to good jobs and effective ways to participate in their communities; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Los Angeles City Council hereby expresses opposition to Initiative 07-0094 and will work with other organizations and individuals to assure its defeat in the November 2008 ballot.

PRESENTED BY Tony Cardenas
TONY CARDENAS
Councilman, 6th District

Bernard C. Parks
BERNARD PARKS
Councilman, 8th District

SECONDED BY E.G. #

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