

**Assembly Joint Resolution No. 40**

**RESOLUTION CHAPTER 42**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 40—Relative to gang violence prevention.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 28, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 40, Huffman. Gang violence prevention.

This measure would urge Congress and the President to establish more effective mechanisms by which the federal government may encourage comprehensive local gang violence reduction plans that reflect promising and best practices and that combine gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies, by providing greater flexibility in the use of federal funds for multijurisdictional and cross-disciplinary approaches.

WHEREAS, Safety is basic to personal and civic health, and gang violence has not only wounded and killed community members, but has rendered some segments of California's communities dysfunctional; and

WHEREAS, Gang violence is a plague that results in the tragic loss of life and serious injury, undermines families and neighborhoods, threatens the well-being of cities, including the ability of community members to be safe outside their homes, and affects an overall sense of community connectedness and hope; and

WHEREAS, Gang activity in California has resulted in 2,771 homicides between 2005 and 2007, according to the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy; and

WHEREAS, According to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the growth of youth gang violence and the proliferation of youth gangs into smaller cities and rural areas in recent years have focused public attention on the youth gang problem and made it an increasingly significant social policy issue; and

WHEREAS, Addressing and preventing gang-related violence requires the use of a three-pronged approach based on stopping the violence and victimization, intervening with those on the edge, and preventing gang participation through the development of individual and community well-being strategies; and

WHEREAS, Adopting comprehensive, communitywide plans that define and harmonize clear goals regarding enforcement, prevention, and intervention that are in concert with regional efforts has proven results; and

WHEREAS, Gang violence prevention strategies are furthered by using data-driven local tactics and strategies, utilizing evidence-based programs and approaches when available, and, where evidence-based programs do not exist, stressing clarity of outcomes and performance measures; and

WHEREAS, Reducing gang activity through prevention results in positive outcomes, including the decrease of not only homicides, but also vandalism, illicit activities, and youth gang membership in target areas; and

WHEREAS, Gang violence reduction also decreases pressures on hospitals, emergency rooms, and county jails, and increases school attendance; and

WHEREAS, Preventing gang activity also provides a way for cities and counties to reinvest regional resources in the community through services and programs to former gang members, including job training, education, counseling, and tattoo removal to keep them from returning to their previous lifestyles, instead of diverting funds to prosecution and incarceration; and

WHEREAS, Local economic hardship has resulted in deep cuts to public safety funding in cities and counties, including law enforcement personnel layoffs, closure of community facilities, and halts on improvements to, or construction of, public safety facilities; and

WHEREAS, Federal grant moneys are an important resource for city and county governments, schools, and community and faith-based organizations to fund programs related to community-oriented policing, drug prevention and enforcement, neighborhood stabilization, at-risk youth mentoring, continuing education, youth employment, and job training; and

WHEREAS, Cities and counties that have shown manifest commitment to comprehensive planning, implementation, and data sharing involving key regional stakeholders could better fund their gang violence prevention strategies if given more flexibility with their existing resources; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully urges the Congress and the President of the United States to establish more effective mechanisms by which the federal government may encourage comprehensive local gang violence reduction plans that reflect promising and best practices and that combine gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies, by providing greater flexibility in the use of federal funds for multijurisdictional and cross-disciplinary approaches; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.