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MICHAEL J. RUBIO

SUPERVISOR - FIFTH DISTRICT

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Supervisor Rubio Launches Victims of Gang Violence Act of 2006

In light of the overwhelming tide of gang violence plaguing the metropolitan Bakersfield area and Kern County, Kern County Supervisor Michael Rubio has called for the hiring of three special prosecutors that will deal exclusively with prosecuting gang crimes. A special prosecutor based in Delano would cover the northern portion of the county, a special prosecutor in Lamont would oversee the southern end of the county and a third special prosecutor would prosecute gang crimes committed by juveniles throughout Kern County.

This first component of the Victims of Gang Violence Act of 2006 will be brought before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, January 17th at the 9am meeting. District Attorney Ed Jagels will offer the proposal as outlined in Supervisor Rubio's request. This piece complements efforts by the Board of Supervisors in approving an increase in the budget of the Sheriff's Department last August to put more than 20 new deputies on the streets of Kern County.

In addition, the Supervisor has asked the District Attorney to investigate possibly implementing a gang injunction program in Kern County. The purpose of these gang injunction programs is to reduce gang activity by prohibiting specific gang members from "hanging out" together, wearing gang colors or staying out past a specific curfew. As Supervisor Rubio has mentioned from the Board of Supervisors dais on various occasions, gang injunction programs have proven crucial in reducing the number and severity of gang crimes in cities and counties throughout California. Local jurisdictions within California that have successfully obtained civil gang injunctions include the City of Long Beach, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, San Diego County, Ventura County, Santa Barbara County, and Fresno County.

Lastly, Rubio has proposed integrating services at various levels of the County of Kern and creating a single streamlined system across departments (i.e. Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, Kern Medical Center, Public Health, Mental Health, etc.) to meet the diverse needs of the children, families and communities it serves. In particular, this would help promote strong early intervention and mentoring programs for youth. This innovative holistic approach would be better able to cut across red tape and bureaucratic requirements to shift the focus to accountability and end results for these troubled youth that most need help.

“As yet another family mourns the death of a loved one at the hands of a gang member, we must act swiftly to address the high rate of gang violence in our community. I will continue to work to provide any and all resources necessary to stop gang violence, particularly as fear and anxiety further grips Bakersfield and Kern County.” Supervisor Rubio stated. “These proposals within the Victims of Gang Violence Act of 2006 will work hand-in-hand to hopefully allow children to again walk the streets without the continual fear of being shot by a gang member for simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time or for wearing the wrong color.”