





Date: March 22, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District 
Councilmember Rae Gabelich, Eighth District 

Subject: AGENDA ITEM: Resolution on Sheriff's Early Release Program

The Long Beach Police Department and the Long Beach City Prosecutor utilize many strategies with limited resources to combat our City's gang problem and other crimes.

One of these tools is a gang injunction, prohibiting identified gang members from engaging in certain activities within a designated area. Violation of the injunction is a misdemeanor offense punishable by a \$1000 fine, six months in jail or both.

However, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, citing budget constraints, maintains an early release policy, resulting in non-violent misdemeanants serving as little as 10 percent of their jail sentence. Violations of Long Beach's anti-gang injunctions are considered non-violent misdemeanors.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recently appropriated an additional \$9 million to the Sheriff's Department for the current fiscal year to re-open and staff more jails. However, the Sheriff's Department has said in press reports that even with the additional funding, this would probably not affect the early release program for non-violent offenders.

The inability to enforce jail sentences will likely have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the anti-gang injunction and other crime fighting efforts.

While recognizing tight budget constraints exist at all levels of government, we believe that a priority must be placed on public safety, including the ability to enforce jail sentences, particularly when serving a jail sentence will deter gang violence.

Suggested Action:

Request the City Attorney to prepare a resolution to be transmitted to the Los Angeles County Sheriff and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors expressing the City Council's strong opposition to the Early Release Program, emphasizing the negative impacts on the City's efforts to enforce gang injunctions and fight crime.