



R-25

Date: March 13, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rae Gabelich, Eighth District 
Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District 

Subject: AGENDA ITEM: Support for Assembly Bill 790 (Karnette) re: Witness Intimidation

Witness intimidation is a fundamental threat to our public safety and to the ability of our justice system to operate effectively and fairly. Threatening or harming witnesses or victims can have a chilling effect on the willingness of other witnesses to come forward and testify, crippling the ability of prosecutors to present evidence. This threatens the very foundation of our justice system.

Assemblymember Betty Karnette has introduced Assembly Bill 790, which would make witness intimidation an automatic felony, rather than either a misdemeanor or felony.

The legislation would also provide an additional four year prison term if the witness intimidation is for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in affiliation with a criminal street gang.

Adding tougher laws against witness intimidation can serve as a further deterrent and will send a message that the residents of Long Beach and the State of California will not tolerate this assault on the basic principles of our justice system.

Recommended Action:

Request the City Attorney to draft a resolution in support of AB 790 (Karnette) to make witness intimidation an automatic felony and to provide an additional four year prison term if the witness intimidation is for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in affiliation with a criminal street gang; and

Request the City Manager to communicate the City's support of AB 790 to Assemblymember Karnette and our state legislative delegation.