



# Law & Justice

## Gang Task Force Recommendations - AWC Legislative Priority

AWC supports local option tools and funding for use by cities in addressing gang suppression, prevention and intervention.

**SSB 5987**, which passed in the 2007 Legislature, created a statewide group staffed by the Washington Association of Sheriff and Police Chiefs to evaluate the issue of gang-related crime in Washington State. The group met in several locations around the state during the interim and released a report with recommendations to the Legislature to address enforcement of gang-related crimes and best practices for prevention and intervention. The task force legislation, **HB 2712/SB 6608**, which AWC supports, includes:

- A proposed criminal street gang definition for use by state and local law enforcement in Washington State;
- \$1 million for a grant program for cities and counties for graffiti abatement;
- \$2 million for a grant program for local law enforcement agencies to support special enforcement emphasis targeting gang crime;
- The creation of a statewide gang criminal intelligence database;
- New and enhanced penalties and sentencing for certain gang-related offenses;
- Authorization for a civil anti-gang injunction;
- Creation of a civil cause of action for victims of graffiti;
- Five pilot projects in the FY 2009-11 biennium to provide programs with a three-prong approach to preventing, intervening, and suppressing gang-related violence. Cities and local law enforcement would be represented on the task force to set up the program.

For more information about the task force, see [www.waspc.org/index.php?c=Gang%20Related%20Crime%20WorkGroup](http://www.waspc.org/index.php?c=Gang%20Related%20Crime%20WorkGroup).

## Strengthening Enforcement of Sex Offender Registration

An incident involving the abduction and murder of a young girl in Tacoma over the summer by an alleged sex offender has renewed legislative interest in this issue. In response, the Governor directed Kitsap Prosecutor Russ Hauge to lead a team of experts to review the facts and make recommendations.

The task force made several recommendations which are consistent with cities' interests. In particular, AWC endorses the expansion of monitoring tools and funding for local law enforcement and additional support services for victims. AWC will vigorously resist any mandates unless sufficient funding is available.

The Governor's budget includes task force recommendations for improvements including:

- **HB 2569** – Providing funding to local government for purposes of registered sex and kidnapping offender address verification and community notification;
- **HB 2713** – Providing for broader collection of DNA for convicted sex offenders;
- Funding for more sexual assault victim advocates in county superior courts;
- Additional electronic monitoring of level II and III sex offenders;
- Additional funding for community corrections officers to work in partnership with local law enforcement officers in Tacoma, Yakima, the Tri-Cities and Clark County;
- Funding for a new unified sex offender registry program to which all local registration Web sites will be linked and updated automatically.

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In addition, a long list of bills focused on improving sex offender supervision have been introduced for consideration, including the following which would place new mandates on local law enforcement or are of particular interest to cities:

**HB 2439** – Requiring jails and prisons housing sex offenders to determine their immigration status and to release offenders subject to deportation into the custody of federal authorities or a federal facility used to house persons awaiting deportation.

**HB 2441** – Requiring law enforcement agencies to enter into assistance compacts with the federal government to enforce immigration laws as they pertain to level III offenders and those convicted of a sex offense against a minor or for failure to register.

**HB 2442** – Requiring additional notification and information on the statewide web site for level I and II offenders who have a conviction for failure to register.

**HB 2445** – Ensuring that all registered sex offenders have submitted a biological sample for inclusion in the DNA identification system, which would provide funding to sheriffs to collect DNA samples for registered sex offenders not already in the database.

**HB 2508** – Requiring collection by the sheriff of a DNA sample for registered sex offenders not already in the database.

**SB 6448** – Providing for broader collection of biological samples for the DNA identification of convicted sex offenders and other persons.

**SB 6489** – Adding level I offenders who fail to maintain registration as required to the statewide notification web site.

## **AWC Sex Offender Residency Restriction Workgroup Recommendations**

During the 2006 legislative session, **SSB 6325** was passed that prohibited local governments from enacting restrictions on sex offender residences. The compromise that was signed into law put in place a statewide restriction that prohibits certain sex offenders from living within 880 feet of a public or private school.

The bill also asked AWC to convene a workgroup to “develop statewide standards for cities and towns to use when determining whether to impose residency restrictions on sex offenders within their jurisdiction.”

AWC convened a city workgroup for the first phase and then expanded discussions to the stakeholder group to discuss improving the statewide residency restriction in lieu of regaining authority to enact local restrictions. The consensus recommendations from that stakeholder group include two items with legislative implications:

- Requiring sex offenders to notify homeless shelters of their status, requiring shelters to have and post policies on their acceptance of sex offenders; and requiring shelters to make sex offender information available to law enforcement conducting address verification; and
- Funding to study if there is a causal link between homelessness and registration/notification requirements for sex offenders.