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CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO LAUDS PASSAGE OF ANTI-GANG BILLS BY CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, the City's chief prosecutor, today lauded the California State Senate for its bi-partisan passage of two separate pieces of anti-gang legislation sponsored by his office.

The first measure, SB 1126, authored by State Senator Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) would aid victims of gang crimes by allowing prosecutors to bring civil damages actions against the leaders and members of violent criminal street gangs.

"Criminal street gangs are finding new and insidious ways to terrorize our communities, and to profit from their criminal activities," said City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, who made the fight against Los Angeles' criminal street gangs his top priority. "If law enforcement is going to end their reign of terror, we must continue to adapt our technologies and laws, to meet gangs head on, to target their assets and their money, and to bring them to justice, once and for all – SB 1126 is a major step toward that goal."

"We must take action against these criminal street gangs by seizing their assets as part of a broader strategy to combat gang activity. Investing the seized assets back into the community strengthens our neighborhoods while at the same time weakening the gangs," said Senator Cedillo.

Criminal street gangs maintain a tight economic control over the neighborhoods they occupy. Their illegal operations allow the gang to thrive while the neighborhood suffers. Their actions cause businesses to close, housing prices to decline, and insurance rates to go up all while the gang profits.

As passed by the Senate 31-0, SB 1126 would allow the Attorney General, district attorneys and prosecuting city attorneys the ability to collect monetary damages awarded in specified civil actions to be paid by, or collected from, assets of the criminal street gang or its members. The law also requires that all monies recovered in the actions be returned to the community that had been terrorized by the gang

The second piece of legislation, SB 1666, authored by State Senator Ron Calderon (D-Montebello) would expand the existing definition of safe school zones from 1000 to 1500 feet and, for the first time, include private schools within the scope of protection. The bill, which passed 35-0, also provides that any person convicted of certain crimes affecting children, in addition and consecutive to the punishment proscribed for the crime, shall be punished by a fine and/or up to an additional year in county jail.

"When a school is in the middle of a gang war zone, children are more focused on stray bullets than books," said Senator Ron Calderon, author of SB 1666. "By expanding Safe School Zones, we will send a powerful message to gang members that we will not tolerate crime and violence around our schools."

Since taking office in July 2001, City Attorney Delgadillo has utilized civil injunctions as an effective tool for law enforcement and prosecutions, adopting and adapting conditions specific to each gang. He's increased the number of gang injunctions from eight to 36, covering more than 56 gangs and more than 61 square miles of claimed gang territory in Los Angeles. In addition, LAPD reports cite a 33 percent decline in gang membership since 2001.

SB 1126 and SB 1666 will now move to the California State Assembly for consideration.

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