



The United States Conference of Mayors

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SENATE PASSES MAYOR-BACKED ANTI-GANG LEGISLATION

Washington, D.C. – Led by U.S. Conference of Mayors President Trenton Mayor Douglas H. Palmer, the mayors of this nation are applauding a victory with the Senate’s passage of the Feinstein-Hatch Bill, which authorizes more than \$1 billion for successful gang prevention, intervention and suppression programs, as well as creates tough federal penalties to punish members of street gangs, protect witnesses and ensure against witness intimidation.

The bill’s passage in the Senate follows more than a decade of efforts by Senators Feinstein and Hatch to enact comprehensive federal gang legislation. The entire bill is summarized at <http://feinstein.senate.gov/gov>.

“Mayors all around the country have consistently worked with police chiefs to push for strong federal crime prevention and anti-gang measures,” said Mayor Palmer. “We applaud Sens. Feinstein and Hatch for hearing our concerns and being so diligent in their efforts to usher this measure through the Senate.”

In response to the recent spikes in crime in America’s cities, the nation’s mayors have called for stronger federal local partnerships on hometown security, as well as Congressional support for anti-crime programs. This priority is reflected in the Mayors’ 10-point legislative agenda, *Strong cities, Strong Families, for a Strong America*, unveiled in January of this year (www.usmayors.org to view agenda).

The Conference of Mayors is the one of many organizations acknowledged by Senator Feinstein as being a supporter of the Feinstein-Hatch legislation. In order for the measure to successfully move through the legislative process, a companion bill must pass in the House of Representatives.

According to Senator Feinstein’s website, at least one quarter of all the homicides in our major jurisdictions nationwide are now considered to be gang-related. In cities where gangs are the most entrenched – such as Los Angeles and Chicago – fully half of all homicides are gang-related. While there were 250,000 reported gang members in 1991, the FBI now says there are 800,000 active gang members – more than the total number of law enforcement officers on our streets today.

“The release this week of FBI statistics citing an increase in violent crime in this country only confirms the need for this type of legislation. Gang violence in America is more than a national tragedy. It is a national disgrace,” said Mayor Palmer. “We must do everything we can to urge the House of Representatives to pass a similar bill,” Palmer concluded.

In the 1990s, mayors and police chiefs put extensive effort into increasing public safety and establishing a partnership with the federal government. As a result, many cities saw crime rates drop to historic lows. In recent years, however, those partnerships were dissolved and crime is now on the rise with gun violence becoming more and more prevalent.

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.