



youth

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Building Lasting Peace in Bell Gardens

THE "WAR ON GANGS" IS A WAR ON YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES!

WE LIVE AND WORK IN LOS ANGELES. We represent parents who have buried their children, children who have buried their parents, young people who have suffered directly from the poverty and violence in our communities; and gang members, former gang members, and gang outreach workers that have organized and sustained truces in neighborhoods throughout the County.

We are concerned that there has been **no public debate** on the need for another **WAR ON GANGS** in Los Angeles. L.A. County's many Mayors, the County Board of Supervisors and numerous law enforcement agencies have chosen a strategy that has been tried numerous times and has only resulted in:

- ❑ No end to gang violence in L.A. County. > The massive lock-up of poor youth and youth of color.
- ❑ Increased racial violence between gangs and neighborhoods resulting directly from racial separation and violence that occurs in jails and prisons.
- ❑ Increased tensions between communities and the police.
- ❑ Increased police brutality and corruption, and vast disregard for youth and communities' constitutional rights.
- ❑ The build-up of the world's largest *and most costly* prison system.

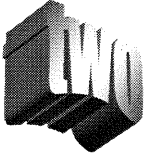
TO BUILD PEACE, FOCUS ON:



HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL REGARDLESS OF RACE, GENDER, IMMIGRANT STATUS OR ECONOMIC CLASS

The United States has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of its prison population, and L.A. County leads the nation in incarceration. These policies disproportionately affect poor youth and youth of color, who routinely get harsh sentences for the same offenses for which middle class youth receive alternative sentencing such as community service or treatment. (Eighty-five percent of the people incarcerated in California are there for non-violent offenses that would be more cheaply and more effectively served by a community-based alternative.) Once in the system, youth are also barred access to many educational, housing and job opportunities, making their successful re-entry into communities even more difficult.

Solutions: (1) Invest equal funding for youth development programs. For each dollar spent to keep a young person in custody -- detention, incarceration or Probation -- invest a dollar in community owned and operated alternatives including youth centers, educational enrichment and job training -- *for teenagers and young adults* in the City's most violent neighborhoods. To protect and support the positive development of all youth: (2) Guarantee that people can not be added to a gang database(s) without receiving official notification and having the right to an appeal process. (3) Ensure that people on the database(s) who are not convicted of a violent felony within 18 months, are removed from the database(s). (4) Exempt all community-based organizations, churches and public transportation from gang injunctions so people named in an injunction can still access essential services such as job training, counseling, etc. (5) Ensure that Probationers and Parolees who complete their Probation or Parole are removed from the database(s).



JOBS NOT JAILS – SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ALL COMMUNITIES

Los Angeles' poor communities did not benefit from the economic prosperity of the past decade. After the 1992 Uprising, Los Angeles officials agreed to create an organization called "ReBuild L.A." which promised \$6 billion in private investment to create tens of thousands of jobs in riot-torn areas in five years. But in less than two years, the organization folded for lack of corporate interest. Out-migration of manufacturing and industry, and cuts to the defense industry resulted in the loss of 530,000 jobs between 1995 and 2000. South Central Los Angeles alone lost more than 70,000 skilled, high wage jobs. Since the recession and September 11th, more than 200,000 additional jobs have been lost in California, many of them in Los Angeles.

Solutions: (1) Provide an immediate infusion of 100,000 jobs for youth currently on the police gang file. (2) Require, as a condition of any public subsidy or permit, that all businesses over a certain size be required to hire and retain at least one former gang member who has transitioned from a job training or educational program. (3) Require that all public agencies similarly provide jobs to former gang members.



HUMANE CONDITIONS IN LOCK-UP.

Prisons aren't working to prepare people to return home, aren't making communities safer, and are bankrupting the state's and County's ability to provide education, jobs and other programs that would reduce violence. Prisons are encouraging and increasing gang violence and race hatred, drug dependency, and mental illness. In California, 81% of the people who go to State Prison and CYA are re-convicted within two years of their release. **Reduce L.A. County's over-population in juvenile halls, jails and prisons by 75% in the next ten years. Build no new jails or prisons, and do not add additional beds to existing facilities. SHUT DOWN CYA AND BRING L.A.'S YOUTH HOME to County and community care.** 85% of youth and adults in lock-ups are charged with low-level offenses and minor Probation violations better addressed in community-based programs or treatment. **Radically transform conditions in the facilities that remain --** including ending the use of solitary confinement; ending the death penalty; ending mandatory lock-down and separation of prisoners by race and alleged gang affiliation which has led to race wars in our communities; eliminating the lock up of youth in adult jails and prisons; and closing CYA and replacing youth prisons with small residential rehabilitation centers.



JUST IMMIGRATION POLICY

Reject the precedents set by local law enforcement agencies in L.A. and throughout the country (since September 11th and the passage of the U.S. Patriot Act) to detain and/or deport people without due process. End the illegal use by police (LAPD, County Sheriffs and other municipal departments of harassment, threatened deportation and referral to the INS of immigrants.

SUPPORT THE ONGOING GANG TRUCES IN NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUILD SIMILAR TRUCES IN OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS:

APPOINT A Peace Process Coordinator to develop and recommend a comprehensive gang violence prevention plan and funds to operationalize the plan including competitive community grants to support peace work. As part of this effort, establish a **Peace Council** composed primarily of individuals with a demonstrated record of effectiveness in working to promote gang truces and other gang violence prevention projects, either on the streets or within the criminal justice system.



TO BE SUCCESSFUL, BELL GARDENS MUST ENGAGE GANG OUTREACH WORKERS AND FORMER GANG MEMBERS IN THESE EFFORTS. WE HAVE ACCESS, TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE THAT L.A. NEEDS NOW MORE THAN EVER.