



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

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August 2, 2011

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 5th Ave. Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine,

We wish to express concern for the recent gang violence in South King County and request that you use the Criminal Justice reserve to respond. There is an emerging escalation of violence erupting in South King County that must be addressed immediately.

As you know, 13 people were shot at a car show in Kent on July 23rd. The shooting has been determined to be between two rival gangs. There have already been retaliatory shootings that have escalated to what can accurately be described as a gang war.

You are also aware that in recent years, King County has lost much of its infrastructure related to fighting gangs. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office lost a federal grant as of June 30th that funded three Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys dedicated to the prosecution of gang related crimes. We understand that Prosecutor Dan Satterberg is doing the best he can in 2011 to shift resources to these activities – especially in light of the recent shootings. However, the Prosecutor has told us that he cannot sustain these activities into 2012 without additional resources. The Prosecutor has requested \$700,000 of the Criminal Justice reserve over the two year period of 2012-2013 to continue the federal gang violence grant. We strongly support the need for this funding.

A week ago, the Kent Police Department convened a meeting of 60 top law enforcement officials from King and Pierce Counties. These officials have committed to “target the most violent gangs and gang members in the area for aggressive enforcement action.” Given the regional nature of these street gangs, King County must emerge as a leader in combating this threat.

In the 2011 budget, the King County Council created a Criminal Justice reserve fund to “quickly respond to the most pressing and emergent criminal justice and public safety needs in 2011.” The Council recently decided to save the Criminal Justice reserve by funding the PROMIS computer system out of fund balance. We can see no more pressing issue for this funding at this time.

There are over 5,000 known gang members in King County and we have averaged more than 200 gang shootings over the last few years. This level of violence is unacceptable and should not be tolerated by our elected leaders. Please consider sending the King County Council a funding package that uses the Criminal Justice reserve to fight gang violence as soon as possible. Without additional resources soon, the gang violence in King County could spiral out of control. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reagan Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Reagan Dunn
King County Councilmember

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Larry Phillips
King County Councilmember