



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Secretary Gary Maynard to Testify in Support Of House Bill 1387 On Gangs

TOWSON, MD (March 19, 2009)---Gary Maynard, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), will be among those testifying in favor of House Bill 1387, which clarifies the language and toughens the law against criminal gang activity in the State. DPSCS is the sponsor of the bill. Maryland State Police Superintendent Terrence Sheridan, Prince George's County State's Attorney Glenn Ivey, Baltimore County Police Chief Jim Johnson, and Juvenile Services Secretary Don DeVore will also testify, beginning at 1pm today before the House Judiciary Committee.

Over the past year, DPSCS and Secretary Maynard have brought together law enforcement and criminal justice leaders to battle against Maryland's ever-increasing gang activity, setting-up work groups, task forces, and information-sharing that has made gang-tracking a top priority across the State. The three DPSCS correctional divisions have dramatically increased gang intelligence and interdiction efforts. DPSCS' Division of Parole and Probation has likewise played a key role in helping law enforcement follow gang-related activity in the community.

Through the first half of FY2009, the Department has validated 23% more gang members in its prisons than in FY 2008; formalized gang intelligence communication procedures for local jurisdictions where offenders are released; and brought 16 of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions into an intelligence-sharing practice.

House Bill 1387 would provide prison terms of up to 20 years and fines of up to \$100,000 for those convicted; include language to specifically prohibit gang-related crimes committed by juveniles under Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and adults under Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) supervision; and clarify how prosecutors and law enforcers may "prove" that a person is a gang member.

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Rather than the current language that says only that a “pattern of criminal gang activity” is needed to prove gang membership, the new bill calls for those charged with gang-related crimes to meet at least two of five specific criteria: self-proclamation; a common group name/insignia/flag, etc.; association with known gangs or participation in some gang activities; regular association with gang members; and physical evidence, including photographs, of any of the above.

In addition, the new bill allows gang-related charges to be brought for weapons and certain misdemeanor crimes.

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