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Contact: Frank Mateljan
(213) 978-8340

CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO LAUDS SIGNING OF ANTI-GANG MEASURE BY GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, the City's chief prosecutor, today lauded California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for his signing of anti-gang legislation sponsored by the City Attorney's Office and designed to allow prosecutors to collect monetary damages from criminal street gangs.

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

"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 has made the fight against gangs his top priority. "If law enforcement is going to end gangs' reign of terror, we must continue to adapt our technologies and laws, to meet gangs head on, to target their assets and to bring them to justice, once and for all."

"I applaud the governor for joining us as we take a major step toward that goal."

Senator Cedillo added, "I applaud the Governor's commitment in fighting against criminal street gangs that maintain tight economic control over the neighborhoods they occupy. Los Angeles County has about 1,200 members who engage in routine gang violence. This law will make gang members directly liable for damages to our communities."

Criminal street gangs often maintain 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 - while the gang profits.

The bill – which passed through the Legislature without a single "No" vote – will provide the California 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.

Now signed, the bill will take effect immediately.