



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine  
Governor

November 1, 2007

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
United States House of Representatives  
2600 Washington Avenue  
Suite 1010  
Newport News, Virginia 23607

Dear Congressman Scott:

As you know, intelligence sources indicate a growth of gangs and gang-related violent crimes in small cities and communities throughout Virginia. Areas once protected from the violent crime evident in larger cities have now become targets. It is well recognized that law enforcement alone cannot adequately address the problem of youth gangs. Strong anti-gang education and prevention efforts are essential to reducing gang membership. I appreciate your commitment and dedication to improving Virginia's communities.

In June 2006, I launched my *Prevention Comes First* initiative to coordinate the prevention-focused efforts to educate, increase public awareness and target responsive resources to improve public safety. This initiative provides the framework for prevention initiatives across the state including addressing gang-related activity. As a component of this initiative through Executive Order 15, I formalized Virginia's Interagency Anti-Gang Workgroup.

This group consists of representatives from 16 different executive branch agencies and organization including: the Departments of Alcoholic Beverage Control, Correctional Education, Corrections, Criminal Justice Services, Education, Health, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, Social Services and State Police, Commonwealth's Attorney's Services Council, Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, Virginia Sheriff's Association, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Offices of the Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. Under the direction of Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall, this workgroup serves the Commonwealth by coordinating and leveraging resources to prevent and reduce gang activity in Virginia. The Workgroup awarded mini-grants to 24 localities in December

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2006 in connection with the Governor's Youth Community Service and Civic Engagement Program. These grants are community-based initiatives that provide youth at-risk for gang involvement with opportunities to perform meaningful service to their communities.

Earlier this month, you introduced the Youth PROMISE Act to provide resources to communities to engage in comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies to decrease juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity. I applaud your leadership in Virginia's gang prevention and intervention efforts. I offer my support and administration's commitment to the successful implementation of this initiative.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of our Commonwealth and I look forward to working with you on this significant issue.

Sincerely,



Timothy M. Kaine

TMK/ecb

c: The Honorable John W. Marshall, Secretary of Public Safety  
Mr. Alfonso H. Lopez  
Ms. Marilyn P. Harris  
Ms. Dawn B. Smith