

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

Anchorage, Alaska

October 24, 2006

10:12 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Lesil McGuire, Chair  
Representative Tom Anderson  
Representative John Coghill  
Representative Pete Kott (via teleconference)  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Max Gruenberg

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Representative Nancy Dahlstrom  
Representative Bob Lynn

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEW: GANGS IN ALASKA

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

PHILIP TAHTAKRAN, Staff  
to Adam B. Schiff  
Congressman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
(Address not provided)

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided comments and responded to questions during the overview regarding gangs in Alaska.

GARDNER COBB, Captain  
Anchorage Police Department (APD)

Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)  
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided comments and responded to questions during the overview regarding gangs in Alaska.

PAUL HONEMAN, Lieutenant  
Anchorage Police Department (APD)  
Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)  
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided comments and responded to questions during the overview regarding gangs in Alaska.

DEAN R. WILLIAMS, Member  
Community Youth Violence Gang Response Team ("the Team")  
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided comments and responded to questions during the overview regarding gangs in Alaska.

MAO TOSI, Founder  
Poly Pride Club  
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided comments and responded to questions during the overview regarding gangs in Alaska.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

**CHAIR LESIL McGUIRE** called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at [10:12:43 AM](#). Representatives McGuire, Anderson, Wilson, Coghill, Kott (via teleconference), and Gara were present at the call to order. Representative Gruenberg arrived as the meeting was in progress. Representatives Dahlstrom and Lynn were also in attendance.

OVERVIEW: Gangs in Alaska

[10:12:52 AM](#)

CHAIR McGUIRE announced that the only order of business would be the overview regarding gangs in Alaska. Specifically the committee would hear about the various efforts currently underway to deal with gang violence, and about the state's role in addressing this issue.

[10:14:25 AM](#)

PHILIP TAHTAKRAN, Staff to Adam B. Schiff, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives, relayed that as Legislative Director

and counsel to Congressman Schiff, who represents a number of communities in the Los Angeles area, he has had the opportunity to examine the issue of gang violence and work on legislation that will crack down on criminal street gangs, which continue to proliferate in communities across the country. In the city of Los Angeles, there are more than 700 gangs with a combined membership of over 39,000 individuals, and during the last five years, there were over 40,000 violent gang-related crimes, including close to 1,500 homicides and over 15,000 felony assaults; in the last few years the Los Angeles area has experienced an epidemic of youth violence that is rapidly spreading from the inner cities to the suburbs.

MR. TAHTAKRAN said that [a 2002 national survey] estimated that there are over 731,000 gang members in 21,500 gangs in over 2,000 major cities across the United States. Although concerns about gangs and gang-related violence were initially isolated to inner-city urban areas, the concerns today have shifted to include violent gang activities that have moved into rural and suburban areas; the increased activity and migration of violent California-based gangs have only heightened these concerns about the spread of gangs. One of the most notorious of these gangs has now surfaced up and down the East Coast of the nation, in areas such as Long Island, New York, the Washington D.C. area, and even Charlotte, North Carolina.

MR. TAHTAKRAN said that although gang-related crime has traditionally been a state and local law enforcement issue, with the federal role limited to grant programs to state and local law enforcement and community-based agencies, as gangs continue to migrate geographically, increase in sophistication, and expand the types of illegal activities they engage in - such as money laundering and complex drug enterprises - Congress has expressed new interest in the issue. Recognizing that the gang problem is no longer a local issue but a national one requiring a national strategy, anti-gang legislation has been introduced in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives.

MR. TAHTAKRAN mentioned that one such piece of legislation introduced by Congressman Schiff - H.R. 970, the Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2005 - is a bipartisan bill intended to increase gang prosecution and prevention efforts by bringing together federal, state, and local law enforcement, providing them with new tools to combat gang violence, and making available new funds to keep kids out of gangs to begin with. He relayed that this legislation is virtually identical

to legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Feinstein and Hatch in the last Congress that has since been reintroduced.

MR. TAHTAKRAN explained that street gangs are increasingly focusing on "full service" criminal enterprises in the neighborhoods where they reside, showing increasing levels of sophistication, and exhibiting characteristics common to organized crime. Since gangs will likely continue to expand their criminal enterprises in new ways and places throughout the country, new and creative ways to attack this problem are required. In 2002, the city of Los Angeles announced that it would begin going after street gangs in the same way law enforcement brought down traditional organized crime figures using the federal racketeering statute, RICO - Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, Title IX of the federal Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 - to its full capacity.

MR. TAHTAKRAN noted that the RICO was designed to prosecute organized crime, with mafia-style organizations in mind, and that the Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2005 would create a similar tool, but one tailored specifically to violent street gangs by criminalizing violent crimes in furtherance or in aid of criminal street gangs. The most lucrative criminal enterprise for street gangs has been the retail distribution of illicit narcotics, and the aforementioned legislation would attack this aspect of the problem by making murder and other violent crimes committed in connection with drug trafficking a federal crime. Street gangs also engage in a host of other criminal endeavors, and the use of firearms is a major feature of gang-related violence, with gang members far more likely than other delinquents to carry and use guns; the aforementioned legislation increases penalties for criminal use of firearms during crimes of violence and drug trafficking.

MR. TAHTAKRAN said that the legislation also allows for the detention of persons charged with firearm [crimes] who have been previously convicted of crimes of violence or serious drug offenses. These new federal crimes and tougher sentences are aimed at deterring violent gang-related crime, and at encouraging greater cooperation between prosecutors and gang members who are facing long jail sentences, such that this cooperation could lead to the identification, arrest, and prosecution of other gang members. These are important steps towards successfully tearing down criminal gang networks, and they are strongly supported by a host of law enforcement

officials who are seeking tougher sentences as a way of stopping gang-related violence.

MR. TAHTAKRAN said that unfortunately, gangs have strong links to the nation's youth; the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has reported that 819 juvenile gang-related killings occurred in 2003 - up from 580 several years before - and law enforcement agencies report that the problem is getting worse. The nation's youth are being held hostage by gangs; gang involvement takes a heavy toll on adolescent social development and life-course experiences, with the end result often being continued involvement in criminal activity throughout adolescence and into adulthood. In order to prosecute an entire gang, it is sometimes necessary to prosecute multiple defendants in the same case, including juvenile gang members. The aforementioned legislation proposes a limited reform of the juvenile justice system (JJS) in order to facilitate federal prosecution of 16- and 17-year-old gang members who commit serious acts of violence.

MR. TAHTAKRAN relayed that the legislation also provides more resources to bolster the fight against gangs and attack the problem at its root; H.R. 970 authorizes approximately \$650 million over the next five years to support federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts against violent gangs, including the funding of witness protection programs and intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth. Funding for federal prosecutors and FBI agents is also increased under H.R. 970 so that coordinated efforts against violent gangs can be improved.

MR. TAHTAKRAN said that Congressman Schiff strongly believes that tough deterrence and enforcement measures must also be coupled with crucial prevention provisions, and that "we can pay now or we can pay later." A small amount of prevention funding invested now can save a lot down the road. Consider that when a juvenile is incarcerated in California, for example, it costs the state \$90,000 per year; investing a small amount on the front end in tested, research-based programs that keep kids out of trouble makes a lot of sense, both in terms of dollars saved and lives saved. Although Congress has acted on anti-gang legislation, there is hope that in the near future further comprehensive anti-gang legislation can be agreed upon and enacted.

[10:23:56 AM](#)

MR. TAHTAKRAN, in response to questions, said that H.R. 970 is tailored towards existing prevention programs, though states may apply for grants for programs that have demonstrated results - the emphasis on the national level is that such funding be given to tested, research-based programs; that he is not familiar with the specific use of counseling to divert children from gang-related activities, however the benefits of reaching youth of middle-school age is strongly supported by evidence; and that [states] must rely upon the experts to decide which programs are working and have demonstrated results.

CHAIR McGUIRE remarked that prevention programs often face a lack of future funding regardless of the benefits they provide.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG raised the issue of possibly providing tax incentives to law enforcement personnel who buy homes and then live in neighborhoods with a high incidence of gang-related activity.

MR. TAHTAKRAN, in response to questions, relayed that he would provide members with additional information on the Gang Resistance Education and Training Projects Program, and that research regarding early childhood development has not been specifically tailored to find links to gang-related activity.

[10:36:54 AM](#)

GARDNER COBB, Captain, Anchorage Police Department (APD), Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), highlighted his past and current duties with the APD, and made use of a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate information about the nationwide gang problem, common definitions, a history of [Anchorage's] gang problem and what it looks like today, some concerns about the current responses being undertaken, and some possible solutions. Referring to the PowerPoint's illustration of statistics provided by the FBI's 2005 congressional testimony, he noted that those statistics have given rise to concerns at the APD regarding the levels of violence and sophistication of weapons, and the number of rounds being exchanged between different groups.

MR. COBB pointed out that although there is a state definition of what constitutes a gang, under that definition a girls' soccer team could qualify; the difference between a girls' soccer team and a street gang, he surmised, is that a street gang demonstrates a pattern of criminal activity. The federal definition of a street gang is very similar to the state

definition, but there is no definition - either state or federal - that defines exactly what a gang member is. The APD's Intel Unit has looked at different policies and criteria from around the country, and has tied these into possible criminal activity in order to "validate" gang members or gang associates.

MR. COBB explained that the term, "gang-related" refers to any crime that involves a gang member or gang associate - regardless of whether he/she is a victim, a suspect, or a witness; whereas the term, "gang-motivated" refers to a crime committed for the benefit of the group. Anchorage, for the most part, experiences gang-related crime, which is engendered by the same things that youth have been fighting over for years; the difference now is that the participants are not finding simple resolutions any more and are instead simply resorting to gunfire. He then indicated that his PowerPoint presentation was illustrating some of the different gangs operating nationwide, gangs that local groups in Anchorage are claiming allegiance to or affiliation with, and mentioned that many gangs start recruiting new members at the middle-school level. Sometimes recruitment is the result of an older gang member coming to Alaska and actively seeking new members, and sometimes it is the result of local youth getting involved in gangs while in middle school.

[10:44:21 AM](#)

PAUL HONEMAN, Lieutenant, Anchorage Police Department (APD), Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), in response to a question, relayed that under state law, someone under the age of 16 cannot be in possession of a firearm unless he/she is with a parent, and that under federal law, licensed gun retailers and dealers can't sell firearms to anyone under the age of 21.

MR. COBB said his position is that the APD is not concerned about law abiding citizens having guns, but is very concerned about youth and others involved in a gang lifestyle having guns; the APD feels it would be nice if it had the latitude within the city limits to ensure that such people can't get anywhere near guns of any kind.

MR. COBB spoke briefly about the types of gangs present in Anchorage, and gave members time to read some of the slides in his PowerPoint presentation. He said the APD doesn't use the term "wannabe" because one is either a gang member or a gang associate or one is not. Every city with a population of over 250,000 has a gang problem, most similar to Anchorage's. He indicated that "Intel" is very important, allowing the APD to

know what groups are out there, who members are, and who leadership is. The APD's primary mission is suppression, and although intervention and prevention is an important part in the solution, the APD must "get these thugs, that have no regard for human life, off the streets, out of the community, for a considerable amount of time so the intervention/prevention part of it can work," he added.

MR. COBB, in response to a question, opined that the majority of intervention/prevention efforts should begin early, particularly given that he has seen gang recruitment occurring at the elementary school level; by the time most kids who've been recruited as gang members reach high school, they are set in their behavior patterns and only a life changing event can break those patterns.

MR. HONEMAN added that community condemnation of gangs is one of the strongest messages that can be sent. Currently, gang members who are injured or killed are martyred in the community, and the community must now send the message - via parents, stronger laws, longer sentences, and community groups - that gangs and gang violence [will no longer be tolerated].

MR. COBB said that there are several reasons people have for belonging to a gang, most not so noble. Referring to statistics on validated gang members and gang associates outlined in the PowerPoint presentation, he noted that the APD currently has only one Intel analyst but hopes to gain more. In response to questions, he indicated that part of the reason for the prevalence of the more virulent strain of the gang problem is because a gang lifestyle has become culturally ingrained, and so it probably won't be stamped out in his lifetime. However, a two-pronged approach to eradicate the problem will do much to decrease gang violence and increase control over the problem. The APD's School Resource Officer (SRO) Program has been instrumental in the APD's response to the gang problem and ensures that specific instances of gang violence don't spill over into the schools.

MR. COBB relayed that he's been told by prosecutors that it would be difficult to prosecute recruiters under the existing statutes pertaining to contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Referring to a PowerPoint slide, he said it illustrates the timeline of Anchorage's gang problem, noting that the initial reaction "from the powers that be" was to not acknowledge that there was a gang problem, and to refuse to use the term "gang" in relation to the violence that was occurring.

Regardless of this approach, gangs were forming and gang-violence was occurring. The APD at one time formed a gang unit, and although though it got enveloped in the federal safe streets program, it was effective in tamping down the violence. As a result, the APD took its eye off the issue for a bit, and this was a mistake because the level of violence rose again.

MR. COBB said that the federal program pretty much ended when [the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001] occurred, as most of the resources for that program got diverted. The APD started the SRO program in 2003; the Intel Unit began operating in 2004; and the current campaign [and methodologies] against this problem began in the spring of 2005. Although gangs will go out of business due to internal strife or pressure from law enforcement, they will often just form other groups.

11:04:24 AM

MR. COBB showed slides illustrating two particularly violent gangs in the Anchorage area and a summary of the crimes they're responsible for, the different types of gangs in the Anchorage area, the particular terminology being used, the differences between predatory gangs and scavenger gangs, and the things that prompt most gang fights. He noted that scavenger gangs - those gangs most common in Anchorage - are more dangerous than predatory gangs because their reactions to any given circumstance are impulsive and emotional; in general, scavenger gangs don't have formal leadership or goals. He relayed that Anchorage's gang problem cuts across all racial lines except for Alaskan Natives; showed slides of local gangs and their tattoos, graffiti, and "colors"; and spoke of some of the difficulties of dealing with particular gangs such as Asian gangs and white supremacist gangs.

MR. COBB relayed that these days gang members who resort to using firearms are shooting to kill, and showed more slides illustrating local gang members and evidence of gang activity, and slides illustrating the APD's efforts to curtail the gang problem, such as the Intel Unit, SROs, and applying for grants. In response to comments and questions, he spoke further about the school safety officer program and SRO program, the duties of those officers and the benefits they bring, and how the SROs are currently deployed.

[CHAIR McGuire turned the gavel over to Representative Anderson.]

MR. HONEMAN provided additional information on SROs.

MR. COBB, in response to other questions, indicated that some gang members that are of school age are still attending school, and spoke about the APD's focus on truancy issues, how truancy programs can have a gang-prevention effect, and possible truancy legislation, adding that having sufficient resources is a critical component of successful prevention/intervention programs.

[Representative Anderson returned the gavel to Chair McGuire.]

[11:25:28 AM](#)

CHAIR MCGUIRE raised the issue of children being suspended from school for bad behavior, and how suspension seems to be rewarding students for such behavior by allowing them to stay home and possibly get into further trouble. She suggested that students who are suspended ought to be forced to come into school to serve their suspension period.

MR. COBB said that although the concept of doing something like that is a good one, funding for such a program would be an issue as would security - the kids who are still in school must be protected from those who've been suspended for violent behavior.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG asked whether SROs could be used to deal with the issue of bullying in the schools.

MR. COBB relayed that the APD could do more on that issue if it had more staff, because current staff are already stretched, and mentioned some of the things that are already being done.

MR. COBB then showed slides illustrating statistics regarding the activity of the Special Assignment Unit between 9/1/05 and 9/30/06 as that activity pertains to state felony charges, federal charges, misdemeanor charges, guns seized, drug seizures, recovered stolen vehicles, and other significant incidents. He showed a slide illustrating the school issues that students in California face now as compared to what they faced in 1940, and added that the gang problem isn't going to be easily solved - without a paradigm shift in [America's] culture, this problem won't go away anytime soon.

MR. COBB relayed that with the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN), shell casings from different gang-related shootings can be tied to one gun. He reiterated that a

two-pronged approach is what is necessary: getting violent gang members out of the community, and intervention/prevention. To effect the former, the APD uses the federal system a lot because gang members are actually taken out of the community for 5, 10, 15, or 20 years, whereas local and state laws don't actually do that; also, the sentences applied to gang members at the local and state level are often insufficient. Furthermore, the lack of sufficient resources is a major issue for the criminal justice system; consider, for example, law enforcement hands the district attorney's office hundreds, sometimes thousands, of felony cases, but the judicial process in Anchorage can only handle about 26-31 such cases per year. And although some steps have been taken to address this issue, a lot more still needs to be done, he concluded.

CHAIR McGUIRE asked whether it makes sense to spend resources on rehabilitation efforts.

MR. COBB indicated that it can, but not for those that commit violent crimes and show a pattern of doing so; therefore, perhaps "a three-strikes law" should be considered. In response to a comment, he pointed out that being part of a gang is not against the law; rather, it is the criminal activity that gang members and gang associates engage in that the APD tries to focus on.

[11:42:33 AM](#)

MR. COBB, in response to a question, offered that there are probably several reasons why crimes involving gang members and gang associates are under-prosecuted, and acknowledged that the APD's system must be changed because it is no longer working sufficiently with regard to the gang problem.

MR. HONEMAN added that the APD makes about 300 arrests per week and so the district attorney's office must perform a sort of triage when deciding which cases to prosecute, and so it will do what it can to clear its calendar simply out of self preservation. In response to a comment, he noted that when a gang member or gang associate is shot or goes to jail, he/she is often seen as a martyr.

MR. COBB reiterated that although the APD's major mission is suppression, intervention/prevention is just as important and needs the same level of resources.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA suggested requiring forfeiture of a vehicle when kids 18 years of age and under have a certain type of firearm in the vehicle even if they all claim that they don't own that firearm.

MR. COBB indicated the APD would consider that option.

[11:48:31 AM](#)

MR. HONEMAN relayed that the APD would be providing the legislature with legislation recommendations. For example, he noted, [HB 184] recently changed state law regarding carrying concealed weapons such that the MOA's [stricter] municipal law was invalidated by state statute; if a particular area of the state has a more serious problem regarding gang violence involving firearms, it ought to be able to craft its local laws so that it can deal with that more serious problem.

MR. COBB reiterated that the district attorney's office needs more funding, and opined that the vast majority of kids will benefit by intervention/prevention/rehabilitation programs, but not those kids who are already killing people; one of the problems with the federal system is that it doesn't deal with juvenile gang members/associates. Community efforts with regard to effective intervention/prevention need to be supported because that component is just as important as the suppression component. The statutory definition of what constitutes a gang also ought to be updated, because hopefully soon there will be some real consequences for being a gang member, and when that happens law enforcement across the state will need a definition that all can use and understand. He also suggested retooling some of the current laws, and instituting new laws such as the aforementioned "three strikes" concept and a RICO-type statute.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG suggested making certain activity in certain areas result in heightened penalties, and having certain areas be subject to heightened enforcement efforts.

MR. COBB indicated that that concept will be considered further along with other suggestions.

MR. HONEMAN pointed out, though, that the law should be enforced equally across the state and that all people are entitled to the same protection under the law.

MR. COBB also pointed out that gang-related violence is not confined to certain areas.

MR. HONEMAN referred to a pamphlet produced by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) that has relevant information about what steps communities and parents can take regarding gangs.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG mentioned that a few of his constituents have been victims of gang-related violence.

MR. COBB concluded by referring to the aforementioned nationwide statistics and said of Anchorage, "People shouldn't be afraid to send their kids to school or go out in the street, but if we don't get a handle on this it's clear where we're heading."

CHAIR MCGUIRE said it is important to recognize that the concerns and fear regarding gang-related violence is spread throughout Anchorage, and remarked on the importance of forming partnerships to combat this problem.

[12:10:49 PM](#)

DEAN R. WILLIAMS, Member, Community Youth Violence Gang Response Team ("the Team"), after relaying that he also works as a Juvenile Justice Superintendent at McLaughlin Youth Center, explained that the Team was created in 2005 by Mayor Begich and tasked with giving him recommendations regarding Anchorage's youth gang problem. The Team issued a report in June of 2006, available in members' packets, outlining what it felt would be a good start toward the suppression and intervention/prevention pieces of a solution. After that report was issued, the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) expressed interest in assisting Anchorage, and he and several others attended an APRI-sponsored conference that dealt with the issue of how cities and communities are addressing certain issues, gang-related violence among them, through innovative and community-based approaches.

MR. WILLIAMS observed that currently in Anchorage there is a strong collaboration among the lead agencies regarding what must be done to address this problem from both the suppression side and the intervention/prevention side. He explained that one of the Team's recommendations is to establish an interagency coordinating network on youth-violence issues that would work across jurisdictions to oversee efforts made by all the agencies and organizations involved. Although there are a lot of great ideas on how to combat gang-related violence in Anchorage, there currently isn't any way to monitor or coordinate efforts, and so

establishing a steering committee will help Anchorage get a handle on all the efforts being made. And although there may be some cost associated with establishing a steering committee, if it is not done, then Anchorage could face getting very few results for a lot of money.

[12:17:30 PM](#)

MR. WILLIAMS noted that the Team recognized that truancy is an issue, and he concurred with Chair McGuire's points regarding students who are suspended from school and a possible school suspension program. Kids getting into trouble while they are suspended or while they are truant is not a school problem, however; rather, it is a community problem, and programs to deal with such issues would really benefit from a steering committee.

MR. WILLIAMS relayed that another main issue the Team is working on pertains to very serious offenses committed by juveniles that fall under the automatic waiver law. The problem is that current law allows 14- and 15-year olds who commit very serious felony crimes to either go through the juvenile justice system - and then not be tracked or supervised once they reach the age of 18 - or through the adult justice system via automatic waiver; this dual-sentencing law has led to cases where similarly-situated defendants are being treated completely different. Furthermore, defense attorneys are doing everything they can to prevent the automatic waiver from being applied. He indicated that the Team will be addressing this issue further.

CHAIR MCGUIRE expressed interest in hearing the Team's final recommendations regarding the current dual sentencing law.

MR. WILLIAMS, in response to comments, relayed that one of the Team's main recommendations is to ensure that there is a plan in place to deal with kids who are suspended from school for misbehaving; currently all such kids are treated the same by the school system, and there isn't yet a good community system in place to deal with those kids that could be helped somehow. He mentioned that research indicates that low attachment to school and a propensity to drop out increases a child's inclination to participate in gang activity and other delinquent activity. In response to further comments, he mentioned that a key point - and one the steering committee will be working on - is to have an agreement among all agencies regarding how to get kids into intervention/prevention programs, because at this point there is no oversight of the various program options out there, nor is there a good triage or filtering methodology in place.

CHAIR McGUIRE suggested that peer mediation programs also be considered.

[12:42:44 PM](#)

MAO TOSI, Founder, Poly Pride Club, relayed that some of the Anchorage gang problem was starting right around time he was going to high school and had it not been for his involvement in sports he too might have become part of that problem; several of his friends at the time did become involved in gang activity and some of them are still in jail. He is now raising a family, has founded the Poly Pride Club - which exists in two [high schools] and numbers about 100 members - and he is seeking every resource possible to help the kids in his clubs take pride in who they are and be successful, both in school and out of school. Unfortunately, most of the kids are high risk with regard to gang involvement, and financing is a large issue.

MR. TOSI relayed that he doesn't have as much time as he'd like to devote to the kids, nor do the clubs have a specific room to meet in. Club members, the majority of which are Polynesian, engage in some cottage industry to help raise funds, and as a former NFL professional, he acts as a role model and assists the kids by tutoring them or training with them, and the first hour of the clubs' gatherings is devoted to study hall. Unfortunately, a lot of kids find it more interesting to be out on the street looking for trouble than to be stuck in a classroom, and so he must find ways of gaining their interest; he surmised that he'd have more kids in his clubs but for a lack of funds that could be used to expand the clubs' activities.

MR. TOSI relayed that it is imperative to raise the kids' expectations of what they are capable of and build their confidence and business skills. One of the things he's done is gotten the kids to start playing chess, which has gotten them to start thinking things through and planning ahead. He noted that younger siblings are influenced by what their older brothers and sisters are doing, and one of the points he has made with the kids in his clubs is that they must be tolerant of people regardless of their race, because in order to be successful in life, one must be able to see past such differences.

MR. TOSI pointed out that kids today are quicker to jump directly from arguing to shooting than when he was in high school, and remarked that suspensions are resulting in kids getting into a cycle of trouble and violence because they're

just hanging out on the street instead of being someplace where they can engage in some constructive activities.

[Throughout this final presentation, Mr. Tosi and legislators briefly discussed possible ways for him to raise funds and/or incorporate his club as a non profit organization.]

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.