

Approved: 3-23-93
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jerry Moran at 10:05 a.m. on March 9, 1993 in Room 514-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: All present.

Committee staff present: Michael Heim, Legislative Research Department
Sue Krische, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Paul Morrison, Johnson County District Attorney
Doug Roth, Sedgwick County Assistant District Attorney

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Moran announced that this meeting would be informational regarding gang activity in Kansas with emphasis on how the Legislature might assist in fighting and preventing gang activity in the state.

Paul Morrison, Johnson County District Attorney, advised the Committee that a gang task force was set up in Johnson County in 1990 (Attachment 1). Early efforts of officials were to increase public awareness and to work with the schools through the D.A.R.E. program since 1990. Mr. Morrison stated anti-gang units in law enforcement have been organized for several years. In response to a question, Mr. Morrison stressed the value of programs in the schools that familiarize children with police officers. Senator Oleen asked if the state should have a statewide anti-graffiti policy and Mr. Morrison stated the most important action to take in combating graffiti is to paint over it or clean it off as soon as possible, interrupting communication among gangs.

Doug Roth, Sedgwick County Assistant District Attorney, told the Committee that Wichita saw an influx of outside gang members from the east and west coasts in 1988, 1989 and 1990. Mr. Roth noted that SB 281, which is scheduled for hearing by the Committee on Thursday, March 11, would allow prosecution of gang members for their activity with the group as opposed to just prosecuting single criminal acts according to current statute. He feels this would be a valuable tool in disrupting gang activity. Mr. Roth advised that there are an estimated 1,200 gang members in Wichita of which 200-250 are hard core members. In response to a question, Mr. Roth stated juveniles sent to YCAT come out more fully indoctrinated into gang culture than before. He noted only the most troublesome juveniles go to YCAT in the first place and a program to combat this indoctrination in the youth center should be emphasized.

Senator Feleciano moved approval of the minutes of February 19 (two meetings), 22 and 23, 1993 as presented. Senator Emert seconded. Motion carried.

The Chairman assigned HB 2460, HB 2097, HB 2315 and HB 2132 to the Civil Law subcommittee; HB 2298, SB 280, HB 2272, HB 2101 and HB 2160 to the Family Law subcommittee; and HB 2448, HB 2462, HB 2100, HB 2009 and HB 2411 to the Criminal Law subcommittee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 1993.

GUEST LIST

COMMITTEE: SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

DATE: 3-9-95

[illegible]

STATE OF KANSAS
Tenth Judicial District

OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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TO: Members of the Senate
FROM: Paul J. Morrison
DATE: March 9, 1993
RE: Senate Hearings on Gangs

In the Spring of 1990 law enforcement officials in our county became concerned about signs of impending serious gang activity. Until that time, we had virtually no serious problems with gang criminal activity in our county. However, counties to the north and east of us were experiencing serious gang related crime. Additionally, our own county population of 365,000 had its share of young people who would certainly be "ripe" for this type of activity. Additionally, we were starting to see gang graffiti popping up in locations throughout our county.

As a result of our concerns, a gang task force was set up to try to prevent serious gang problems from occurring in our county. Originally, the task force had several diverse components; law enforcement, the educational establishment and city government. One of the early goals was to raise public awareness and to begin to have the different components of "the system" work together. I feel that much success has been gained in our county because we initiated several activities before gang activity became a major problem.

Our early efforts were aimed at increasing public awareness. Among other things, our office used drug forfeiture funds to bring in a national expert and held public forums regarding these issues. The media was helpful and through a series of events, public awareness of the potential for a major problem was raised.

SJ

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Attachment 1

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For the first time in history, law enforcement began to work closely with the school districts on a regular basis. We now meet through our safe schools committee with the administrators of the school districts in our county. Since we have had the D.A.R.E. program county-wide (over 100 elementary schools) since 1990, we are experimenting with expanding the program to middle schools with a possible anti-gang curriculum. Law enforcement working closely with schools has resulted in several benefits in addition to the gang problems.

Law enforcement has organized itself in that the anti-gang units in the various police departments meet every other week to discuss issues of common interest. The juvenile court has addressed this issue through two gang specialist's court services officers. Additionally, the District Attorney's Office has a gang prosecution unit which has been very successful.

I am happy to report that despite our fears, serious gang problems have not yet affected our county. Although we have gangs in our county, it appears as though activity continues to be down so far in 1993.