

**GANG CRIME AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT JOINT  
RESOLUTION**

2010 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Mark B. Madsen**

House Sponsor: Ryan D. Wilcox

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This joint resolution of the Legislature urges state and local governments, law enforcement agencies, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to take urgent and targeted actions against the various types of gangs in Utah to sharply reduce the level of gang activity and the appeal of gangs to young people.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- ▶ urges zero tolerance of gang activity or of any activity that facilitates the establishment, growth, and functioning of gangs of any type in Utah;
- ▶ urges law enforcement agencies and the courts at all levels to aggressively target all activities that gangs engage in, beginning with graffiti and petty crimes, in order to disrupt gang activity and to discourage youth from becoming involved with gangs;
- ▶ urges state and local law enforcement agencies to partner with and take advantage of the special measures that federal immigration law provides to encourage cooperation of witnesses and informants, and to protect victims of crime in order to disrupt criminal gang activity, remove illegal immigrant gang members from the streets, and better protect the public; and
- ▶ urges employers to use an identity verification system to eliminate the market for gang-produced, fraudulent documents which facilitate cover for gang members who



28 are involved in the drug trade and other violent criminal activities.

29 **Special Clauses:**

30 None



32 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

33 WHEREAS, the Salt Lake Metro Gang Project reports that law enforcement has  
34 identified 241 unique gangs in the Salt Lake area and reports that there are 30 unique gangs in  
35 Washington County, 22 unique gangs in Tooele County, and 15 unique gangs in Utah County;

36 WHEREAS, the Salt Lake Metro Gang Task Force reports that law enforcement  
37 agencies identified approximately 3,300 gang members in Utah in 2009;

38 WHEREAS, over 18,000 total gang-related crimes were committed in the Salt Lake  
39 area in 2009, representing a 65% increase in gang crimes from 2008;

40 WHEREAS, non-graffiti gang crimes increased 69% from 2008 to 2009;

41 WHEREAS, Salt Lake area law enforcement alone spent over 10,000 hours  
42 investigating gang crimes in 2009;

43 WHEREAS, Salt Lake area law enforcement has made 2,904 gang arrests in the past  
44 eight years, with 406 arrests occurring in 2009;

45 WHEREAS, the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office reports that gang culture found in  
46 Salt Lake and Utah counties is one of the most diverse in the western United States, with major  
47 California and Chicago affiliations along with Southeast Asian groups, Polynesian gangs, racist  
48 and non-racist skinheads, motorcycle gangs, extremist animal and environmental groups, and  
49 others;

50 WHEREAS, the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office has recently identified two trends  
51 within Utah Hispanic gang culture, including more transplants from California gangs and an  
52 increase in gang members from ~~S to Mexico's~~ large ~~S to international~~ drug cartel gangs;

53 WHEREAS, the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office reports that as much as 70% to 80%  
54 of the area's street level narcotics have been imported either from or through Mexico and drug  
55 gang members in Utah are involved in the distribution of drugs like cocaine, ~~S to Mexican~~ black ~~S to~~ tar  
56 heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamines;

57 WHEREAS, gangs are involved in human trafficking and in modern day slavery of  
58 various types;

59 WHEREAS, gangs have traditionally major involvement in criminal activities,  
60 including the production, transportation, distribution, and use of illegal drugs, money  
61 laundering, murder, witness intimidation, extortion, theft, rape, kidnaping, prostitution, and  
62 weapons violations, and often attempt to cover their illegal activities with legal businesses;

63 WHEREAS, rural areas throughout Utah are encountering a flow down effect from  
64 gang activity in Salt Lake County and Las Vegas;

65 WHEREAS, illegal immigrants too often become involved in gangs as evidenced in the  
66 St. George area where the largest gangs frequently include illegal immigrants who integrate  
67 within and prey upon a rapidly growing illegal immigrant community;

68 WHEREAS, legal immigrants and minorities are too often the victims of gang-related  
69 activities and violent crime in their communities;

70 WHEREAS, St. George and the surrounding area has a growing number of white  
71 supremacist, Straight Edge gangs, Native American gangs, and motorcycle gangs;

72 WHEREAS, the most effective way to address gang violence is through a zero-tolerant  
73 law enforcement approach coupled with statewide, community-led efforts to counter gang  
74 activity through parental responsibility and a wide range of civil and educational programs;

75 WHEREAS, the Center for Immigration Studies reports that illegal immigrant gang  
76 members rarely make a living as gangsters but typically work by day, often using false  
77 documents;

78 WHEREAS, some gangs are involved in the production and sale of false documents  
79 used by other illegal immigrants to commit major felonies including identity fraud, while  
80 obtaining jobs;

81 WHEREAS, the Center for Immigration Studies has concluded that immigration law  
82 enforcement is a key ingredient in the success of criminal gang suppression efforts;

83 WHEREAS, research has found no "chilling" effect on the reporting of crime as a result  
84 of local law enforcement partnerships with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE);

85 WHEREAS, gang task forces would benefit from collaborating and working with an  
86 ICE agent or local officers with formal immigration law training because programs aimed  
87 solely at removing incarcerated illegal immigrants are not as effective in addressing gang  
88 activity as investigative programs; and

89 WHEREAS, local law enforcement agencies that shun involvement with immigration

90 law enforcement are missing a critical opportunity to protect their communities:

91           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah  
92 urges zero tolerance of gang activity or of any activity that facilitates the establishment, growth,  
93 and functioning of gangs of any type in Utah.

94           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges law enforcement and the  
95 courts at all levels to aggressively target all activities that gangs engage in, beginning with  
96 graffiti and petty crimes, in order to disrupt gang activity and to discourage youth from  
97 becoming involved with gangs.

98           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges state and local law  
99 enforcement authorities to partner with and take advantage of the special measures that federal  
100 immigration law provides to encourage cooperation of witnesses and informants, and to protect  
101 victims of crime in order to disrupt criminal gang activity, remove illegal immigrant gang  
102 members from the streets, and better protect the public.

103           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges employers to use an identity  
104 verification system to eliminate the market for gang-produced fraudulent documents which  
105 facilitate cover for gang members who are involved in the drug trade and other violent criminal  
106 activities including rape, underage sexual activity, human trafficking, murder, and modern-day  
107 slavery.

108           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Immigration  
109 and Customs Enforcement, the Utah Department of Public Safety, the Utah Highway Patrol,  
110 the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Utah Chiefs of Police Association, the Utah  
111 Sheriff's Association, and to the members of Utah's congressional delegation.

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**Legislative Review Note**  
**as of 3-1-10 8:23 AM**

**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**

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**S.J.R. 18 - Gang Crime Awareness and Enforcement Joint Resolution**

**Fiscal Note**

2010 General Session

State of Utah

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**State Impact**

Enactment of this bill will not require additional appropriations.

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**Individual, Business and/or Local Impact**

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable costs and/or benefits for individuals, businesses, or local governments.

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