OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE : October 30, 2006

TO : Honorable Members of the San Diego City Council

FROM : Mayor Jerry Sanders

SUBJECT : Appointments to the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention

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It is my pleasure to appoint Vincent Iaria, Carl Cohn, Benita Page, Steve Eldred, Kevin Henderson, Conrad Harris, Gary Gallegos, William Lansdowne, Larry Fitch, Marilyn Stewart, Michael Sise, Elias Vazquez, Harry Cooper Jr., Alicia DeLeon Torres, Rosemary Ortega, Eugene Johnson and Christopher Yanov, to the City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, subject to your confirmation.

As you know, when the Gang Commission was adopted into the Municipal Code by the Council, its make-up was proscribed such that the Mayor would appoint members of the Commission to fill 17 seats with specific areas of subject matter expertise or representation. In making appointments, I am required to appoint eight members from nominees submitted to me by each Councilmember to represent his or her district.

In addition, it is my responsibility to appoint one at-large member; one member from the field of K-12 education; one member from a community organization working on gang issues; one member from the field of law enforcement; one member from the field of public health; one member from the field of social services; one member from the San Diego Association of Governments; one member from the San Diego Workforce Partnership; and one member who shall be a reformed gang member. In each of the brief biographies below, I have noted the representative seat each nominee will hold.

Vincent Iaria, Chief of San Diego County Office of Probation will serve the Commission as the Mayor's nominee for At Large Member. Chief Iaria is a probation veteran of 34 years, serving in Suffolk County Probation before coming to San Diego County Probation. He is known for developing strong partnerships with the community, law enforcement agencies, schools and government leaders. Under his leadership, Suffolk County began operating a gang training program to educate residents about gang activities, ran a school-based policing program and had a special program for female offenders. He represents California for the American Probation and Parole Association, sits on the SANDAG Public Safety Committee, the Commission on Children, Youth & Families, The Children's Initiative board, the Workforce Partnership Youth Council and serves as Chair of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council.

Carl Cohn, PhD, Superintendent, San Diego Unified School District will serve the Commission as the Mayor's nominee for K-12 Education. Dr. Cohn has more than 35 years experience in education, serving as teacher, counselor, central office administrator and superintendent. Before coming out of retirement in July 2005 to join the San Diego Unified School District, he worked for ten years as superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District, California's third largest district. Dr. Cohn has served as an Independent Monitor for the Los Angeles School system. He was appointed to the National Assessment Governing Board and he serves on the Boards of the Re-inventing Schools Coalition, the Wallace Foundation Education Leadership Advisory Committee and the National Heritage Academy. Dr. Cohn resides in the community of Kensington.

Benita Page, Executive Director of the CHOICE Program will serve the Commission as a Community Based Organization representative. The CHOICE program is an intensive intervention program of the June Burnett Institute at the San Diego State University Foundation. San Diego CHOICE works with families and youth through community-based, family-centered interventions. Youth served are between the ages of nine and eighteen who have exhibited multiple risk factors for gang or juvenile delinquency behaviors. An SDSU research team recently published a study on current CHOICE program outcomes for Probation and HHSA referred high-risk youth including the finding that 89% of youth did not have a new arrest and 71% of youths exit successfully from the program. Ms. Page, who has over 25 years of experience of working with at-risk populations, resides in the neighborhood of Serra Mesa.

Steve Eldred is a Program Officer for The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation. Mr. Eldred will serve as the Mayor's Public Health representative. Mr. Eldred is the program lead at the California Endowment for Community Health and the Elimination of Health Disparities in the San Diego/Orange County border region. In addition to reviewing proposals and developing funding recommendations, Mr. Eldred leads strategic planning discussions on health challenges and opportunities in crime and violence prevention within criminal justice systems. Mr. Eldred resides in the City of Oceanside.

Kevin Henderson is an Outreach Specialist with Metro United Urban Ministries and will represent Social Services on the Commission. Metro United is an outreach agency of the United Methodist Church and provides direct social services and community development support for the forty-eight United Methodist Churches throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties. Mr. Henderson, a former gang member himself, works with youth providing them with alternative solutions to gang involvement through the Urban Advocates program. Mr. Henderson resides in the community of Mt. Hope.

Conrad Harris is a carpenter with a prominent national builder and will serve the Commission as the Mayor's nominee with experience as a reformed gang member. Mr. Harris was involved in gangs and has served time in prison. He is active in community with organizations such as Overcoming Gangs, a program of Gladiator Gym. He attended Lincoln High School. He received his diploma in 1984. Mr. Harris resides in the community of Southcrest.

Gary Gallegos is the Executive Director of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Mr. Gallegos is a nationally recognized expert in the areas of transportation, land use, regional public policymaking, and bi-national cooperation. SANDAG is the regional research,

planning and transportation agency for the area's 18 cities and county government. Mr. Gallegos leads a staff of nearly 200 professionals who collaborate to develop public policy initiatives for elected officials on numerous issues encompassing population growth, transportation, environmental management, economic development, municipal finance and public safety. He will be supported on the Commission by Cynthia Burke, Ph.D., Director of the Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG. Mr. Gallegos resides in the community of Tierrasanta.

Chief William Lansdowne was sworn in as San Diego's Chief of Police on August 4, 2003 and will serve as the Mayor's nominee representing Law Enforcement. Over the years, Chief Lansdowne has expanded his expertise and his reputation as one of the foremost law enforcement professionals in the country. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and has served on a variety of state and national boards, including the Major Cities Chiefs and the National Conference for Community and Justice. Chief Lansdowne will be supported on the Commission by Lieutenant John Leas, head of the Gang Suppression Unit.

Larry Fitch is president and CEO of the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc. He has 30 years experience in the workforce development field. The National Alliance of Business recognized Mr. Fitch for his workforce development accomplishments with the Development Professional of the Year Award. The Partnership is responsible for $26 million annual budget of funding job training and education programs throughout the city and county of San Diego. Mr. Fitch will be supported on the Commission by Kelly Henwood, Director of Youth Programs at the Workforce Partnership.

Marilyn Stewart, Director, Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Transition Network and was nominated by Council President Scott Peters. Ms. Stewart worked for over 30 years at San Diego County's Health and Human Services Department in child welfare services, employment and youth transition services. She also worked with the San Diego office of Casey Family Programs a national program established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey to serve children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. She has extensive experience in social services planning and systemic improvements. The YES Transition Network works with transitioning youth aged 13-24. Ms. Stewart resides in University City.

Michael Sise, M.D. is the Director of Trauma Services at Scripps Mercy Hospital and is the nominee of Councilmember Faulconer. Dr. Sise is also a Clinical Professor of Surgery at UCSD School of Medicine. His experience in dealing with the after affects of substance abuse and violence in communities has made him a vocal advocate for violence prevention. Dr. Sise is founding member of the San Diego County Methamphetamine Strike Force. He is the recipient of the Blue Knight award from the San Diego Crime Commission and the Honorary Service Award from the Ninth District PTA. Dr. Sise has been featured in local media and on The Learning Channel's *Trauma: Life in the E.R.* television program.

Elias Vazquez is Deputy Center Director at Job Corps and was nominated by Councilmember Toni Atkins. Based in Imperial Beach, San Diego Job Corps provides vocational and academic services for youth from throughout San Diego County. A 40-year-old federally funded program, San Diego Job Corps in ranked 15th by performance among 121 Job Corps programs nationwide. Mr. Vazquez resides in Chula Vista.

Harry Cooper Jr. is the Pastor of Southeast Community Presbyterian Church PCUSA. Pastor Cooper was nominated by Councilmember Young and will serve as Chair of the Commission.

Before coming to Southeast Community Presbyterian Church, Pastor Cooper was on the national staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Atlanta, and with the National Rainbow Coalition. A founding member of Black Men United, an advocacy organization in Southeastern San Diego, Pastor Cooper has served on the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission, is on the Board of Directors of the Urban League, and is a founding member of the Holly Drive Leadership Academy Charter School and the Vital Link Family Center. Pastor Cooper resides in Spring Valley.

Alicia DeLeon Torres is a Division Manager with the Union of Pan Asian Communities and was nominated by Council District 5. Ms. DeLeon-Torres manages local, state and national projects under the Children and Youth Development Division of UPAC. She sits on the National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse, is the chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Constituent Committee, an advisory body of the California Department of Alcohol and Drugs and is a regular speaker and trainer for the National Crime Prevention Council. Ms. Deleon Torres resides in the community of South Park.

Rosemary Ortega is a reformed gang member and community activist and is the nominee of Councilmember Frye. Drawing from her experience and involvement with street gangs at an early age, Ms. Ortega has turned her past into a tool for changing the future for local youth. Her understanding of the root causes and cycles of gang life gives her insight and allows her to make a deeper connection with youth and individuals who may be following a dangerous path.
Ms. Ortega resides in the neighborhood of Linda Vista.

Eugene Johnson is the founder and owner of Unity Tech Fitness Center and was nominated by Councilmember Madaffer. Mr. Johnson has been working with youth for many years at his Hawaiian Kempo facility on El Cajon Boulevard in City Heights. Through this facility, he teaches youth how to physically and mentally express themselves through martial arts. It is his goal to engage youth in such a way that they avoid the devastating personal costs of participating in gangs. Mr. Johnson works closely with local area schools and has established a non-profit computer lab at the Center. Mr. Johnson resides in the community of Skyline.

Christopher Yanov is the Executive Director of Reality Changers: Agentes de Cambio and is the nominee of Councilmember Hueso. Reality Changers was founded in May 2001 and focuses on reaching out to inner-city students in San Diego who are surrounded by drugs and violence in their communities yet have a strong desire to change these realities. The organization works to send each member away to a four-year university upon completion of high school. Mr. Yanov resides in the community of Golden Hill.

I ask your confirmation of these nominees and that you join me in thanking them for their willingness to give of their time and serve the citizens of San Diego in this important capacity.

JS:ach

cc: Michael Aguirre, City Attorney
Elizabeth Maland, City Clerk
Kris Michell, Deputy Chief, Community & Legislative Services
Ted Martinez, Deputy Chief, Neighborhood & Customer Services
Lynn Sharpe-Underwood, Executive Director, Gang Commission