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## **GLORIA MOLINA ANNOUNCES GRAFFITI ORDINANCE APPROVED AND IN EFFECT SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

### **Molina Goal: Parent Accountability and Restitution to County**

LOS ANGELES (August 19, 2008)—Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina announced that her graffiti ordinance was unanimously approved today and becomes effective in 30 days on September 18<sup>th</sup>. The ordinance expands Molina's graffiti enforcement program and allows for a civil process in addition to the existing criminal procedure. The new ordinance mandates that:

- I. The county can declare itself a "graffiti victim" in unincorporated areas and recover costs for graffiti abatement, including enforcement, removal, and damages.
- II. The county can recoup unpaid costs through liens or special assessments against the property of the graffiti offender or parent/guardian of an offending minor.
- III. The cost of graffiti abatement has been re-assessed to truly reflect the true cost to taxpayers for removal, repair, or replacement of defaced property to \$522; and \$665 for enforcement per incident in county areas.
- IV. Adult graffiti offenders are subject to a civil citation issued by the Sheriff and administered through the county's Ombudsman for fines up to \$1,000. First Offense—\$250; Second Offense—\$550; Third Offense—\$750; Fourth Offense—\$1,000, along with a non-compliance fee. If there is any financial hardship, community service in lieu of the fine could be considered.

The new ordinance expands Molina's graffiti enforcement program which resulted in 168 arrests and confiscation of weapons, drugs, and graffiti tools within a six-month period this year. This included parents completing the Parent Project and the minors enrolled in a youth intervention program. As a result of long delays in the system with cases involving minors, Molina has also asked the District Attorney's office to apply its Juvenile Offender Information Network (JOIN) to graffiti cases for minors with first-time offenses. It allows for a contractual agreement with the minor, requiring community service, youth counseling program, outstanding school attendance, and requirements that the parent/legal guardian must pay restitution and complete the Parent Project program.

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“Graffiti is an epidemic—and through our Graffiti Enforcement Program, we are telling the graffiti vandals we mean business,” Molina said. “This is about preventive services for families, intervention programming for first time offenders, and aggressive suppression and enforcement for the most egregious taggers. As long as we are successfully prosecuting graffiti vandals and holding parents accountable, we are making progress in our fight against graffiti and crime. I hope other jurisdictions will implement similar graffiti enforcement efforts.”

In response to the murders of Pico Rivera resident Maria Hicks and Valinda resident Robert Whitehead—who tried to stop graffiti vandals—Molina initiated an aggressive graffiti enforcement effort which holds parents accountable and requires restitution for damages and enforcement costs. Most recently, East Los Angeles resident Luis Sandoval became another graffiti-related murder victim.

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