

During my 2005 campaign for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors the following position paper on crime was posted on my goharry.net web site as an html page. The paper has been converted to a pdf format.

CRIME

For the last two decades crime has been a major problem in the Central Division. Many of our citizens have been trapped in their own homes and forced to live in a daily existence of fear.

The effort to fight crime in Central has been greatly supported by business leaders from the Florin Road Partnership under the leadership of Executive Director Larry Carr. The Stockton Boulevard Partnership, under Executive Director Richard Greene, has taken great steps in fighting crime. Extraordinary volunteers with the Sheriff's Department have put in countless manpower hours to help address the crime problem. No one denies there have been heroic individual and team efforts by brave law enforcement officers, from command personnel to line staff, to serve Central. However, the reality is, the level of crime has remained too high and our community image remains one of blighted buildings, abandoned vehicles, rampant prostitution, violent crime, and out of control drug dealing.

While surrounding areas grow better, the Central Division has not been as fortunate. The Central Division has become the poster child for our new era of two Americas. Many citizens view the homicide rate as one of the leading indicators of a community's overall crime problem. In 2003, the Central Division lead the other seven Sheriff's Department patrol divisions in homicides. Of the 20 promptly identified homicides in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County for 2003, the Central Division had eleven (11). The Northwest Division followed Central with three (3) homicides. Within only the first three months of 2004, many people had been murdered in Central. By early March, as reported in the Sacramento Bee, Central had several homicides and was on track to rapidly surpass the eleven (11) total homicides of 2003 (see table).

Central Division	CHPD	East	EGPD	North Central	Northeast	Northwest	South
11	1	1	2	1	0	3	1

2003 HOMICIDES (as reported at one point)

The Central Division is being lost to crime day by day, block by block, shooting victim by shooting victim and child by child. Clearly, Central needs a lot of help from county leaders.

Several factors contribute to the crime problems in the Central Division and other areas. Each factor must be addressed if we are to bring down crime and establish order:

- **Budget Savings**

Every year, county departments are tasked with saving a portion of their budget to return at the end of the year as "Budget Savings." Department Heads do not hire all of the workers they could, so they can meet their Budget Savings quota. This is unfair to workers who must carry a greater workload, so the county can save money.

During the budget hearings in May 2004, the District Attorney said she achieved her Budget Savings by not hiring attorneys to fill vacant positions. She said the net result of not filling the positions was that her staff was overworked and experienced stress at the possibility of cases falling through the cracks. At the same hearings, the Sheriff's Department reported it achieved five million dollars in Budget Savings by carrying 53.6 vacant positions.

In 2003, just in the Central Division patrol unit alone, 25 percent of the sixty (60) Patrol Officer positions allocated to the Central Division were kept vacant. Officers in the Central Division were fighting crime with one out of four of their back-up officers missing. This situation was made worse because on any given day a number of officers were out due to vacations, general time off, illness, short-term and long term injuries, training and court appearances.

For Central, I am not just worried about cases falling through the cracks. The policy of Budget Savings jeopardizes officer safety and the protection of citizens. Officers in Central carried a high number of vacancies while still handling the most crime in some critical categories (see table).

CRIME TYPE	Central Division	CHPD	East	EGPD	North Central	Northeast	Northwest	South
Felony Assaults	236	96	140	51	146	173	160	14
Residential Burglaries	740	342	458	363	476	446	723	119
Attempt Homicide	5	3	2	1	3	0	3	1
Rape	36	17	22	14	20	33	22	3
Robbery	336	95	177	76	209	109	155	5
Shoplifting	441	333	36	258	170	51	173	0

SOURCE: Sacramento Sheriff's Department, via media source

For years, we have placed a heavy burden on the shoulders of the officers in the Central Division. When I talk to people at meetings or on the streets, a clear majority view law enforcement as their highest priority. They are willing to pay a more for improved law enforcement service. I am confident that if county leaders work together we can improve public safety for the citizens and working conditions for the officers in Central.

It is time for change! I want an adequate number of officers on the streets in the Central Division. I want to improve the process of Budget Savings.

- **Strategic Plan**

Even if we achieved a buildup in the number of officers working in the Central Division, nothing beats a solid, long-term and community based plan to address crime. I am currently pushing for a five-year plan, with a long-term funding strategy to fight crime in Central. The biggest hindrance to fighting crime in the past has been the lack of a clearly articulated and a long-term plan to address the embedded problems of crime. Drug dealing is the paramount problem facing the Central Division. Any successful long-term anti-crime plan for the Central Division must be structured around a solid, intelligence based, street-level drug fighting strategy.

Recognizing the need for such a plan, I began developing the Central Division Drug Elimination Plan in 2002. Key goals of my vision were:

- The overall reduction of drug trafficking, drug related crime and calls for service by 25% in year one and 50 % in year two.
- Develop a recognizable community drug education program through partnerships with schools, shopping centers, sports and volunteers.
- Build better relationships with neighborhoods, businesses, apartment complexes, churches and civics groups.
- Build better working relationships with other law enforcement agencies.
- Develop a unified community mission to fight crime and drugs.

In 2003 Central adopted the Drug Elimination Plan. In a nutshell, we put a team of officers on the streets and on the heels of street-level drug traffickers who, at times, had gone unchallenged. The plan has won praise from line officers and command staff and is a key element in turning around the Central Division. The plan has shown solid and promising results. Residents living at or near some of our open air drug markets have already benefited from the implementation of the Drug Elimination Plan. I am proud to say we now have a credible and solid daily mission to combat drug dealing in the Central Division.

Drug dealers rapidly adapt to law enforcement suppression tactics, but we have a strong foundation and a new commitment in Central to fighting street-level drug trafficking. We still have a long way to go, but with diligence we will break free of the drug dealers' chokehold on the Central Division.

In March of 2004, command staff brought a squadron of additional officers into the Central Division to address what was seen as a sudden spike in crime. The effort was named the "Gun Violence Interdiction" operation (GVI). The GVI operation was successful on several levels: criminals were put on the run, officers in Central appreciated the help, citizens saw an increased police presence, valuable criminal intelligence was collected and brazen street-level trafficking dropped. The GVI and efforts of the Drug Elimination Officers produced another important result that must be studied and replicated; for several months the homicide rate dropped in Central.

Sheriff's department officials told me a new effort to fight crime in Central was coming. I have placed my trust in these leaders that their promise will be kept. I look forward to working with the administration to fulfill their commitment.

I will continue to fight to make sure every level and branch of government is focused on tackling the bold problems facing the Central Division. I want to highlight these problems for everyone in the Sacramento region to see. Our children deserve no less law enforcement protection than children in Elk Grove, Carmichael, or Fair Oaks.