

A Satire on Reducing the Number of Gang Members in America's Urban Centers

It is an awful circumstance to those who walk through the urban centers of this great country or travel to the outlying suburbs, when they see the city streets overrun by various street gangs, instilling in every passerby, a feeling of uncertainty and fear. These gangsters, instead of engaging their time in working for an honest livelihood, are inclined to employ all their time roaming the city participating in illegal activities, drugs and violence.

Factors ranging from racism, poverty, and media have profound effects on the development of youth in America. Television, movies, radio and music influence children and promote the use of drugs, sex and violence as an acceptable lifestyle. There are an extraordinary number of young citizens who, frequently raised in a single parent household, are lured into the refuge of a street gang. It is true that a youth entering a gang may find comfort and support in the family tradition, structure and discipline of such social groups. A youth who is desperate for some form of social acceptance might also find within the desirous entity of a gang, companionship, training, excitement and adventuresome activities. Thereby, eliminating their sense of hopelessness that results from their wanting material belongings and their difficulty in meeting basic physical and psychological needs, which if left unfulfilled, lead to a lack of self-worth and pride.

However, considering the opinion of the greater population who live in our gang-inflicted cities, it is believed that a young person who enters a gang will no sooner become a dangerous nuisance to the community and ultimately end up behind bars. Therefore whoever could devise a fair, efficient and economical method of making these misguided children useful, conforming members of the nation, would deserve so well of the public as to have his or her face chiseled amongst the great leaders of our spirited nation on Mt. Rushmore.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts upon this important subject, and having carefully weighed several gang-prevention strategies, I have found them to be rather impractical. Certainly the community can establish stronger social and training programs to enhance a youth's positive development. Of course there are always the community recreation programs such as music, sports, drama and volunteer service.

Perhaps quick removal of gang graffiti, which is used to mark a gang's turf and indicate ownership of a crime, could help to decrease the public's awareness of a gang's presence in the community. However as I mentioned previously, I find these social contrivances to be more of a burden on the community than a benefit, mostly because they require effort, participation and commitment by the citizens to make their community a safe place to live. It is exactly at the first year of entering school, at that tender age, that I propose to provide for them in such a way, to prevent their being a burden upon their parents or the otherwise peaceful community. There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme in that it will reduce today's costs of incarceration, including the increasing demand for prison construction and law enforcement, which is forcing the government to reduce or eliminate the vital services available to its united citizenry. Prisoners get free food, free housing, free medical care, and free supervision, all of which far exceeds the services received by the tax paying entities of our fair country.

The number of imprisoned souls in America being no less than one million and a half, and there being an additional three and a half million probationers and parolees, all contribute to an astounding five million people under some sort of correctional supervision in our United States today. This present situation is a great burden to our nation's taxpayers, whose states spend over twenty billion dollars on corrections, although not including an additional five billion dollars on policy protection, nor the seven billion dollars annually spent on the legal system and welfare support for families of incarcerated breadwinners. I must also address the foregone income and tax payments lost while such prisoners are behind bars, being of a yield for our nation's government in the amount of fifteen billion dollars. This astounding fiscal atrocity, when honed to an individual figure, calculates to a yearly expense per prisoner of approximately twenty eight thousand seven hundred seventy five dollars. Of those jailed criminals, I calculate there to be nearly three hundred fifty thousand prisoners whose crimes were committed under the guidance and supervision of a violent gang, which brings me to address the taxpayer's cost of imprisoning those committing gang-related crimes to the value of ten billion dollars.

I am assured that a boy or a girl just of ten years old is a long-term detriment to our great nation when, at such an age, they become members of a gang. I have found it

true that the number of arrests and incarcerations for serious crimes are the highest among youthful citizens between the ages of ten and twenty years old. It is also likely known that between eighty and ninety percent of such alleged crimes are gang-related. The question therefore is...how to properly handle the rising gang activity amongst the youth of our nation's urban populations? For once a child has entered into a gang, we can no longer properly educate, employ and ultimately utilize this specimen for the betterment of our nation. I shall now humbly propose my own thoughts towards the aforementioned subject, which I hope to sway even the most bleeding hearted critic.

I do therefore offer for public consideration that any child living in the heart of the urban center, prior to entering the public school system, must complete the mandatory *Standardized Habitus and Optimization Test (SHOT)* in order to assess the likeliness of his or her joining a gang. The components of the test will measure such influences as family structure, family values, the child's exposure to crime and the proximity of gang activity in their immediate environment. The child's parent or parents will complete an additional section of the test, which measures household income and employment activity. A composite score will determine whether the child will attend a standard public school or a specially designed school that separates children who, according to the test results, are most likely to get involved in gang-related activities. The proposed institution, which is wholly geared to accommodate such at-risk youth, will ensure a certain reduction in the rising population of gang bound youth by allowing the students to engage in school-directed shooting and killing by means of supervised gunfire. In order to facilitate this sure-fire method of reducing the gang population, every student will be issued a handgun at the beginning of the school year and will be held accountable for the condition of the weapon at the end of the school year. For the protection of the community, handguns will be distributed at the beginning of every school day and collected at the end of the day, and in order to ensure the safety of the staff members, all rooms and offices will be encased with bulletproof glass. I am certain that the bulletproof glass will not detract from the student/teacher relationship. Children living in the cities across America are used to this type of human interaction and students will feel just as close to their teachers but will essentially have more freedom in the classroom.

Given the new issuance of guns in the schools, I also find it necessary to propose a system that coincides with the responsibilities of gun ownership and outlines the behavior desired by all students. To this effect a new curriculum, *Building Up Leadership and Learning by Ensuring Trust (BULLET)* would be put into place and which, if properly projected, could lead toward higher standards of educational excellence and elimination of gang related violence. Under the *BULLET* students will be encouraged to react impulsively in response another student's provoking behavior by merely shooting his fellow classmate when the urge arises. Of course it is imperative to mention with the *BULLET*, each child will receive complete handgun usage and maintenance training to ensure the highest levels of competency and accuracy. I can think of no better method to install a sense of accomplishment and responsibility into our nation's youthful future than in the possessing of a firearm, learning how to use it properly and having the *BULLET* to cap off such a desirable program. Any child who makes it through to his or her senior graduation is sure to be more sensitive to his fellow citizens as well as understand the value of a good education, and be prepared to settle in to the weave of our great nation as a hardworking, taxpaying entity.

In computing the total number of handguns necessary to accommodate the enrollment figures for the upcoming school year, I determined that there would be approximately four hundred fifty thousand children entering kindergarten. I have calculated upon a medium that nearly one quarter of the newly enrolled children, having already taken the *SHOT*, will be eligible to attend the proposed school for at-risk youth. This is surely a great advantage to our nation's prosperous interests. I have already computed the charge of jailing one prisoner for a year's sentence, and because the estimated number of gang bound children is at least one hundred thousand per annum or more, then I see it advantageous to lessen the number of gangster children among us by method of educational based shooting.

I think the advantages by the proposal, which I have made, are in the least a reasonable response to an issue of utmost urgency. For first, as I have insinuated, it would greatly lessen the number of gang members, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal inmates of our prison system as well as the most dangerous and unproductive criminals. Whereas the elimination of approximately two hundred thousand children

every year, all of whom without doubt would be eventually bound for the jail, would save the hardworking taxpayers of our country over five billion dollars per year; and the long term affects of this calculation are even more staggering.

Secondly, children would grow to be loyal, patriotic and conforming members of society fit for labor and corporate responsibilities. The lesser quality children having already been eliminated, those surviving to high school graduation will now understand the importance of hard work and benefit from their honest education. I must admit this could be highly beneficial for the corporate sector, since they are continuously complaining about the lack of quality, responsible and well-trained workers in the force.

Thirdly, whereas the necessity of supplying our educational system with handguns and re-designed curriculum, cannot be computed at less than five hundred million dollars annually as revenues generated from the manufacturing of new handguns and printing of appropriate textbooks, which I am certain would require frequent revisions and reprints.

Fourthly, the nation's government would gain from the saving of assistance provided to those broken families in the form of welfare and will be rid of the charge of maintaining an increasing number of students in the school system.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against the equity of this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of children in our country would be much lessened.