

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Charlotte Aheart, (410) 841-3101

Delegate Gerron Levi Introduces the Maryland Gang Prosecution Act of 2010

(Annapolis, MD – February 4, 2010) -- Delegate Gerron Levi (23A) today introduced legislation to strengthen Maryland's gang prosecution law. The bill is supported by the state's prosecutors and a cross section of the law enforcement community throughout the state.

“This legislation builds on the current gang prosecution law which prosecutors across the state have said is not working,” said Levi. “We have not had a single successful gang prosecution under the law to date.”

The bill would allow prosecutors to more easily prove that crimes committed by known gang members are, in fact, gang-related. It establishes a uniform way for law enforcement to verify gang members across the state; adds assaults, retaliation against witnesses and other crimes to the list of underlying crimes that may be the basis for a gang prosecution; and, requires gang members committing crimes for the gang to serve more time.

Gang activity has been reported in 22 of Maryland's 24 counties, according to Maryland State Police. According to the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, there are more than 600 active gangs in the state with membership totaling over 9000.

“There is evidence of gangs in our schools and in some of the crimes being committed. I do not want to see gangs gain a greater foothold than they already have in Prince George’s County or across the state” added Levi. “Not on my watch.”

“Witness intimidation, assault, burglaries are part of gang initiations or are inflicted as punishments for not joining a gang,” Levi said. “Gang members must serve more time for these heinous crimes if we have any hope of ridding our communities of their dangerous activities and influence over the state’s youth.”

###