



Georgia Gang Investigators Association

www.ggia.net

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Leslie Dunn Events
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****PRESS RELEASE**** **For Immediate Release**

The Georgia Gang Investigators Association (GGIA) has received a request to provide the underlying methodology supporting its 2018 calculation of the number of criminal street gang members and associates active in Georgia. In what follows, GGIA will briefly explain how GGIA arrived at its total of over 71,000 criminal street gang members and associates in Georgia in July 2018.

GGIA is an organization comprised an amalgam of federal, state, local, military, law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, and juvenile justice professionals who voluntarily serve and work together in their dedication to better protect Georgia and the United States from the threat of criminal street gangs. For two decades, GGIA volunteers have trained, taught, and worked with government and civilian organizations of all kinds, regardless of political alignments, to achieve this goal. GGIA's gang study was part of that mission.

In May of 2018, GGIA embarked upon the process of gathering criminal street gang membership and association data. The goal was to determine an accurate calculation of the current number of criminal street gangs, gang members, and gang associates in Georgia, as those terms are understood under Georgia law.

Accordingly, GGIA surveyed its 1400 members, local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as corrections, juvenile justice, and other detention facility representatives concerning the number of street gang members and associates in their jurisdictions. GGIA encouraged standard methodologies and procedures when identifying criminal street gang members and associates. Additionally, GGIA provided universally accepted criteria for jurisdictions to utilize when making their determinations.

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Among the questions in GGIA's survey were, specifically, for respondents to identify the number (if any) of criminal street gangs, gang members and gang associates within their respective jurisdictions. To prevent miscalculation due to overlapping reports, GGIA's survey directed the respondents to only provide data strictly for the jurisdiction that they serve and no others. As such, GGIA's survey was specifically designed to prevent overestimation.

When a jurisdiction did not respond to GGIA's survey, Georgia state agency reporting data from the Georgia Department of Corrections, Georgia Department of Community Supervision, and the Department of Juvenile Justice was used to verify the suspected gang affiliated population for that specific county.

With the foregoing in mind, GGIA's release of the number 71,000 in July 2018 was based upon survey results from questions posed to law enforcement, corrections, and juvenile justice professionals from across Georgia. GGIA accurately conveyed the totals of the calculations that were provided to GGIA. Along the way, GGIA remained vigilant: careful to ensure that proper methods to determine gang affiliations were employed by all jurisdictions; and dedicated to preventing miscalculation or overestimate.

While GGIA's statistics accurately report the information received from its survey, the actual number of gang members and associates likely exceeds GGIA's survey data. Several factors support this conclusion. First, for a host of reasons, gang activity and membership is notoriously underreported. In addition, reference to federal and academic studies would at the very least indicate that Georgia's gang membership and association numbers surpass GGIA's survey results. Plus, several jurisdictions did not respond to GGIA's survey, thus artificially lowering GGIA's totals.

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Regardless, as Georgia's General Assembly announced in O.C.G.A. § 16-15-2, we are in a state of crisis due to gangs in this State. GGIA's survey results vividly demonstrate this. Even, however, if the number of gang members in Georgia were mere fraction of GGIA's findings, the General Assembly's admonitions would still ring true.

Thousands of members of highly violent, criminal associations inhabiting Georgia is beyond dangerous. It is a crisis. A call for enhanced, proactive law enforcement and prosecution measures is necessary for the public safety in Georgia. GGIA has spent two decades answering that call and will continue to do so.

GGIA is in hopes that all concerned with public safety, education, and economic development in our State will rise above partisanship and confront Georgia's gang threat. This should be done across all lines and with the same sense of determination and devotion that makes Georgia. These are the sentiments that provided the impetus behind GGIA's 2018 survey and GGIA's release of its results. That inspiration continues to drive GGIA in its mission to protect Georgia from criminal street gangs.

James P. Callaway
President, Georgia Gang Investigator's Association

****End Statement**