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COUNCILWOMAN GREUEL CRACKS DOWN ON GUN VIOLENCE

Proposal would ban installation of secret compartments in vehicles to hide firearms

LOS ANGELES – Continuing her efforts to keep Angelenos safe, Councilwoman Wendy Greuel introduced a proposal in the City Council today, which would ban the installation of secret compartments in vehicles to hide firearms. In 2007 alone, nearly 80 percent of homicides in Los Angeles were the result of gunfire and 70 percent of all shootings involved a criminal street gang.

“Gun and gang violence is a plague on our communities,” said Councilwoman Greuel. “These compartments do nothing but help criminals evade the law. This proposal gives law enforcement another tool to help fight crime.”

According to law enforcement officials, an emerging trend is the installation and use of secret compartments in vehicles to hide firearms. The compartments are sometimes very sophisticated and difficult to access unless the owner knows of a combination and its location. These secret compartments circumvent an officer’s ability to effectively search for weapons and represent a major threat to public safety as well as police and law enforcement authorities.

Cars are a common tool used in gun crimes. They are used in or for:

- Drive-by shootings of rival gang members, hate crimes targets, innocent bystanders and dwellings;
- Storing, transferring, or concealing narcotics, firearms, or ammunition;
- Maintaining control of gang territory through violence, threats, intimidation and harassment;
- Defacing and intimidating the community through graffiti; and escaping from the police.

This proposal is part of a comprehensive program by Councilwoman Greuel, Mayor Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles City Council to combat gang and gun violence in Los Angeles. Other proposals include:

- Banning .50-caliber, military-style ammunition
- Giving landlords the power to evict tenants convicted of using and possessing illegal weapons and ammunition
- Licensing ammunition vendors

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