

Meth Issues Require a Holistic Approach for Long Term Solutions

By: Danny Gilmore

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When I ran for office I did so in response to the critical issues impacting the daily lives and well-being of residents in the 30th Assembly District. The use and sale of methamphetamines, and the subsequent crippling effect it has on our communities, is something I have witnessed firsthand as a California Highway Patrolman, and whose eradication is one of my top goals as a State Assemblyman. The unfortunate reality is that meth is pervasive within the Central Valley and no one is immune to its effects whether first-hand or otherwise.

My 31 years as a Highway Patrolman reinforced the simple truth that methamphetamine issues—and all drug problems for that matter—cannot be resolved through law enforcement alone. While enforcement is an integral part of maintaining public safety, it is only part of the solution. It does not address the underlying issues that are at the heart of drug dependency and pervasiveness.

Addressing the entirety of this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that incorporates education, rehabilitation, law enforcement and community involvement. Thankfully, here in Kings County, the Kings Partnership for Prevention provides the framework that allows for the information sharing and coalition building that is integral to reducing the impact of meth and other drugs in our community. Through the efforts of this collaborative, the issues related to drugs locally are shared in real time with my office and across a wide array of agencies and activists that each plays a key role in the community. This information makes for better decision making here locally, as well as in Sacramento.

Some of the legislation I carried this year was aimed at better-equipping law enforcement with the tools they need to effectively carry out their duties in ensuring public safety with regard to drug offenses. My personal experience along with information from local law enforcement showed the clear need for more effective laws regarding certain offenses because all too often the judicial process is held up by a lack of streamlined language and sentencing guidelines. This, in turn, leads to recidivism and less safe neighborhoods. My legislation was crafted to improve the quality of life for 30th Assembly District residents and Californians as a whole. To that end, it is crucial that all of the community stake holders involved in combating drug issues on all fronts, and at all stages, interface with the Partnership for Prevention and my office so that we can more effectively serve the needs of the community.

It has been shown that the effectiveness of prevention and rehabilitation is increased through consistent education that begins early in life. It is my hope that through partnering with the many organizations devoted to ending the cycle of drug dependency in the Central Valley, we can develop effective solutions that improve the quality of life for everyone and save tax-payers money through reduced crime and the related incarceration costs of high recidivism rates. By approaching meth and other drug issues from all angles, the long term benefits have the potential to be far-reaching and permanent. Anything short of effective collaboration ultimately produces only half-victories and doesn't address the issue in its entirety. I support the efforts being made locally to deal with this critical issue and look forward to being part of the solutions that will come from them.

Our communities face many challenges as they try to grow and succeed in very difficult times. All of the issues associated with Methamphetamines are another hindrance to sustaining and the communities of the Central Valley. It is my goal as your State Assemblyman to do everything in my power to improve

quality of life for the residents of my district. Please contact my office at 559.585.7170 if we can be of service to you.