
Dear Editor,

I am writing concerning criminal gang activity here in Minnesota. There, law enforcement is using their best efforts to curb the problem, but more can be done to stop more development of these criminal organizations in the community.

As of today, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) is who combat criminal gang behavior. They were established by the legislature to assist peace officers around the state in solving local crimes and apprehending criminals. The BCA is currently under the Department of Public Safety. Their job is to oversee and sustain a computerized criminal gang investigation data system that is designed to help criminal justice agencies with the investigation and prosecution of gang members committing crimes (University of St. Thomas, n.d.).

There are many reasons why gang prevention is so important. Joining a gang can have major effects on both the youth and the communities in which they live. When compared to periods before and after gang involvement, the rate with which someone commits serious and violent offenses generally increases while they are a gang member. Teens who are members of a gang commit far more severe and violent crimes than adolescents who are not members of a gang (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).

According to the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the best approach to prevent the growth of gangs is to start when they are children. When taught earlier in age it starts a path to prevent them from joining gangs and engaging in serious criminal behavior. The prevention methods need to include the community, family, and schools, all engaging in these intervention programs together for them to be successful. Because control efforts alone will not stop the flow of gang-related violence, early intervention and prevention are essential (University of St. Thomas, n.d.).

Sincerely,

Your Name

References

University of St. Thomas. (n.d.). *Evaluation of gang databases in Minnesota & recommendations for change: Community justice project.*

<https://www.leg.mn.gov/docs/nonmnpub/oclc476283924.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice. (2013). *Changing course: Preventing gang membership.* Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/239234.pdf>

Hello Deaquanitta,

It is always good to hear that there are places where people can genuinely say they feel safe, and these places are places you would want to raise children. Being born in Las Vegas Nevada, regardless of the news stories and things I hear, I have always felt safe in my hometown. Even when I have lived in the “not of best” neighborhoods. I have never had any real threatening problems or concerns. But after reading many of the posts from most of our classmates, like you, I am noticing that most seem to live in Mayberry. I have to say I am starting to reconsider if I should continue living here. :D When you become okay or comfortable with stepping over a drunk, homeless person or walking past what appears to be a group of thugs at night, maybe I ought to reevaluate my living environment. I have become accustomed to things I should not be. Long story short, your post got me thinking, I wonder which place is the safest to live in the U.S. I found a pretty neat site called NeighborhoodScout.com. If you do not mind me using your post, I would like to share some interesting statistics.

- Lewisville, TX is safer than **26%** of other U.S. cities
- Las Vegas, NV is safer than **12%** of other U.S. cities
- The chances of becoming a victim of a violent crime are **1 in 457** in Lewisville and **1 in 182** in Las Vegas.

The top five safest cities are:

1. Franklin, MA: safer than **96%** of U.S. cities, and the chance of becoming a victim of a violent crime is, **1 in 10,000**
2. Long Beach, NY: **94% / 1 in 1,761**
3. Milton, MA: **94% / 1 in 2,508**
4. Zionsville, IN: **93% / 1 in 7,089**
5. Lexington, MA: **93% / 1 in 1,841** (Neighborhoodscouts.com, 2020).

Overall Massachusetts seems like a pretty safe place to live.

References

Neighborhoodscouts.com. (2020, September). *Crime rates*.

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Public Health England. (2015). *The mental health needs of gang-affiliated young people: A briefing produced as part of the ending gang and youth violence programme*.

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