

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) introduced today the Anti- Gang Enforcement Act of 2009 along with Reps. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) and Sue Myrick (R-NC). Recently, gang violence has increased dramatically in South Florida and across the county. This legislation will help provide local and federal officials with additional resources and tools to help stop criminal street gang, specifically regarding gang recruitment.

“In April I hosted a round table in Fort Pierce with community leaders, residents and law enforcement officials to discuss ways to combat the growing gang violence on the Treasure Coast,” said U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney. “The Anti- Gang Enforcement Act of 2009 takes important steps to help prevent gangs from recruiting new members and increases penalties for involvement in criminal gangs. We need to make sure local and federal officials have the tools they need to put an end to senseless gang violence. I thank Reps. Rick Larsen and Sue Myrick for joining me in this bipartisan effort.”

“Snohomish County and other parts of my district have seen an increase in gang violence, some of it related to international drug smuggling,” said U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (WA-02), co-chair of the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine and a co-sponsor of the bill. “We need to tackle this problem head-on, and giving federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors more resources to crack down on gangs is an important part of the solution. I thank my colleagues Rep. Tom Rooney and Rep. Sue Myrick for their leadership on this issue and for working with me on this important legislation.”

“Gang violence is becoming an issue in communities across the country,” said U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick (NC-09). “My district has seen more than its fair share of these problems, and we need to send a clear message that gangs and gang related violence will not be tolerated. We need to come down hard, and the resources allocated in this bill are a step in the right direction.”

The Anti Gang Enforcement Act of 2009 prohibits the recruitment of minors in a criminal street gang and increases penalties for violent crimes related to gangs. The bill will increase funding for the federal prosecutors and FBI agents to expand coordinated enforcement efforts against violent gangs. It authorizes \$5 million for FY 2010 to 2014 to expand the FBI’s Safe Streets Program. The Anti Gang Enforcement Act will enhance existing gang and violent crime penalties to deter and punish illegal street gangs. Additionally, the bill creates a new criminal offense for murder, kidnapping, sexual assaults, maiming, assaults with a dangerous weapon, or assaults resulting in serious bodily injury, which are committed in furtherance or in aid of a criminal street gang.