

To: Rep. Christopher Hurst & Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee

From: Stop racial profiling of youth now! Coalition

Stop Racial Profiling Now! is a coalition of communities and organizations concerned with the continuing criminalization of our youth of color. In a budget-year where the infrastructure supporting youth of color is suffering a disproportionate share of the state's budget cuts, it is unconscionable that the proposed HB 1126 legislation would railroad vulnerable youth into the juvenile justice and prison systems.

HB1126 legislation ignores proven methods for preventing youth from joining gangs in favor of a ratcheting up of criminal penalties. HB 1126 allows civil orders—known as injunctions—to be issued against people law enforcement labels gang members. This labeling does not require that the person has actually been convicted of a crime.

As if that was not punitive enough, a youth arrested and charged with violating the injunction would serve mandatory time in prison or juvenile detention, where they would meet hardened criminals.

In a state where the education system is failing our students of color AND where youth of color are two or three times more likely than white youth to be placed in a confinement facility, this type of racially charged punitive approach will only railroad our kids into the prison system.

Prevention not Profiling

The Stop Racial Profiling Coalition urges Attorney General Rob McKenna and the legislature to focus on efforts that would actually make an impact on kids not joining gangs. Here are ten things that would be much more effective than criminalizing our most vulnerable kids:

1. Support our schools in way that reduces the racial and ethnic achievement gap
2. Support early childhood education
3. Support after school programs
4. Support immigrant youth and their families
5. Support low-income families who need help by providing basic health
6. Enhance economic opportunities in neighborhoods with people of color
7. Support mentoring programs
8. Support youth chemical dependency programs
9. Support reentry programs
10. Enhance youth violence prevention programs

Sincerely,

Aliansa Student Coalition

Asian Counseling & Referral Service

Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of King County

Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Pierce County

Asia Pacific Cultural Center

Children's Alliance

Community to Community

Filipino Community of Seattle

First Place School

FUSE Washington

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) - Seattle

Chapter

Latino Community Fund

Latino Civic Alliance

Minority Executive Directors Coalition

Mujeres Fuertes

Mujeres of the Northwest

Nonprofit Assistance Center

OneAmerica

SEIU Healthcare 775NW

SEIU Local 925

Social Work Immigration Alliance

Statewide Poverty Action Network

Washington Community Action Network