

CA Governor announces \$9.2M in grants to combat gang violence

Funds will assist prevention, intervention and enforcement efforts

AS part of his continued commitment to combating gang violence, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced the awarding of more than \$9.2 million in competitive grants to provide local assistance funding to 17 cities and 13 community-based organizations in areas with heavy concentrations of gangs. The Governor made the announcement at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Gifts for Guns event where he promoted that program for providing citizens with an incentive to surrender firearms that could potentially be stolen and used in a crime or to injure someone.

"Public safety is my highest priority and these grants are an important part of our efforts to protect our communities by providing them with the resources they need to help reduce gang violence at the local level," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "To combat gang violence, we need effective suppression, intervention, and prevention tactics - so that we are driving down violence in a smart and focused way."

The Gifts for Guns program was developed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 2005 and provides a unique opportunity for area residents to safely surrender any firearm,

anonymously and without questions, to Sheriff's personnel in exchange for a \$100 gift card (for any handgun or rifle) or a \$200 gift card (for an assault weapon). Last year, the Sheriff's Department collected more than 3,000 guns, which are later destroyed.

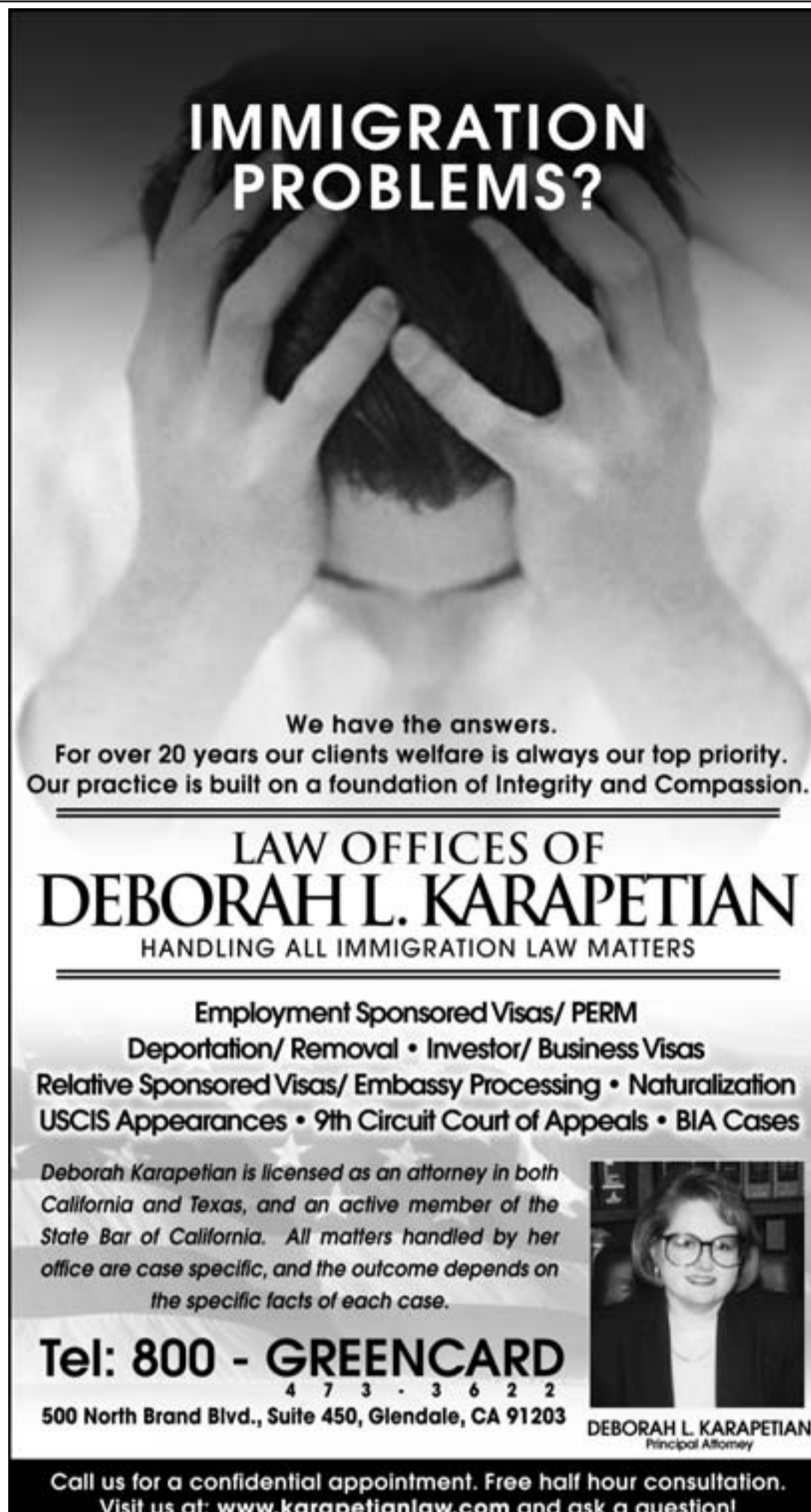
Building on his administration's public safety efforts, the Governor also announced the formation of the Safe Community Partnership, a unique public-private partnership between the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy and three foundations that will provide technical assistance to five cities that obtained grants to implement a proven anti-violence strategy. The three participating foundations, which contributed a total of one million dollars to fund the technical assistance, are The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment and Kaiser Permanente Northern California Region: Community Benefits Program.

"The three major foundations that are stepping up today to participate in our state's anti-gang efforts are great partners in the fight against gang violence," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "With their support, we are launching a public-private partnership that will provide technical and expert assistance to five cities with

heavy concentrations of gangs to implement an anti-gang strategy proven to reduce gang violence."

The Safe Community Partnership will support a strategy widely regarded as the most effective approach to reducing gang violence. Developed in Boston in 1993 under the name Ceasefire, it has been used in various other cities, including Stockton, and has been evaluated as effective - quickly and substantially reducing gang violence with a "carrot and stick" approach. Gangs are expressly warned by law enforcement leaders that further violence will result in the prosecution of all members of the offending gang or gangs, either for the violence committed or for any other provable crime. At the same time, these gangs are offered an alternative to gang life, particularly job training and jobs.

"California is in the midst of a deadly and protracted epidemic fueled by gangs and guns," said Paul Seave, director of the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy. "After losing more than 15,000 lives in 30 years, our communities must implement anti-violence strategies that work. The Safe Community Partnership, combining public and private resources, will support five cities that have chosen a proven approach." ■



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Deborah Karapetian is licensed as an attorney in both California and Texas, and an active member of the State Bar of California. All matters handled by her office are case specific, and the outcome depends on the specific facts of each case.

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