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Sacramento, CA – Amid concerns about crime, Congresswoman Matsui (CA-5) sat down with Sacramento law enforcement leaders, including Police Chief Albert Najera, to receive an update on the problem and discuss efforts underway to proactively address the increasing crime. Included in the discussion were potential federal resources like funding for additional law enforcement through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and funding for the Police Department's innovative Gang Intervention and Prevention Program.

“Crime in Sacramento is a serious problem that needs to be addressed, but we need to tackle this as a community. We need law enforcement, city leaders, businesses, parents, schools, and community organizations to work together,” stated Congresswoman Matsui. “This is a complex puzzle and everyone brings a piece to the table. Part of the answer is more police on the streets, but it is also about removing cultural barriers, providing activities for children after school, as well as, ensuring economic opportunity and hope for the future. Another part is looking to affect these youths’ lives at an early age like the police department’s Kids-n-Kops program.”

Sheriff John McGinness stated "The Sacramento Sheriff's Department is pleased to partner with Congresswoman Matsui while actively seeking solutions to the escalating level of gang related violence within the communities of South Sacramento. We are committed to providing the resources and focus that is necessary to return a sense of security and well being to all county residents. I appreciate Congresswoman Matsui's willingness to engage in this issue and her work in seeking to secure Federal appropriations in support of our local efforts."

Since the start of the year, Congresswoman Matsui has been working with the Police Department to provide federal funding for their innovative Gang Intervention and Prevention Program. Through a new community language translation and gang counseling intervention and prevention program, police are seeking to begin to bridge the gap between non-English speaking parents and the Police Department. As part of this effort, the police have created the “Kops-n-Kids” program to create positive relationships between police and children from 9 – 12 years old. The House included Sacramento's proposal in the Science, State, Justice, & Commerce Appropriations Bill and with its inclusion it is well-positioned as the legislation moves through the appropriations process.

The Congresswoman has also been working with local law enforcement to ensure Sacramento receives its share of resources from other federal initiatives. This includes the Byrne-Jag Grant program and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, in addition to the COPS program. COPS funding was used last year to hire 50 new police officers, 10 of whom were put in schools. This year, because of budget constraints, President Bush called for cutting and even eliminating many of these programs. As a result, Congresswoman Matsui is working with her colleagues to fund these federal programs crucial to local communities. For example, the president recommended reducing COPS funding from \$457 million in last year to \$52 million this year. Fortunately, the House has funded the program at \$487 million. Additionally, instead of eliminating the Byrne-Jag grant program as the president recommended, the House included \$558 million for the program.

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