

The background checks performed under the Brady Act have proven to be a vital part of our nation's crime control efforts. Since its enactment, the Brady Act has prevented more than 650,000 felons, fugitives and other prohibited persons from purchasing handguns. The IACP believes that no action should be taken that would damage the demonstrated effectiveness of the current background check system.

Thank you for considering our views on this matter.

Sincerely,

BRUCE D. GLASSCOCK,  
*President.*

It is important to note that the letters from the FBI Agents Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police both indicate that they are not aware of any allegations of misuse of the information retained in the gun purchase records.

There is another concern which I am compelled to share regarding the public safety aspect of allowing law enforcement personnel the necessary time needed to track down would-be criminals who try to purchase guns. I also enclose for the RECORD an FBI report on the growing violent gang activity, not only in the District of Columbia and the northern Virginia region, but across our nation. It is sobering. This a very serious—and growing—problem. While the FBI report focuses specifically on Mara Salvatrucha, more commonly known as MS-13, numerous gangs have been infiltrating our country in recent years and indications are that few communities are spared.

Gang members thrive on terrorizing communities through random acts of violence. They steal. They kidnap. They extort. They torture. They murder. Obtaining guns and other weapons are part and parcel of their operations.

While we may not know for certain how the 24-hour records destruction provision will impact criminal gang members who are terrorizing innocent people in northern Virginia and other areas of the country, law enforcement officers on the front lines of fighting crime certainly have a strong belief that reducing the time to check for illegal gun purchases could hurt their ability to protect public safety.

In these times of fighting not only international terrorism but violent gang activities in our local communities, shouldn't we be making public policy that gives law enforcement personnel the assistance they need to thwart the gun purchases of suspected terrorists and gang members rather than giving the advantage to the criminals?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION,  
Washington, DC, November 12, 2003  
MARA SALVATRUCHA 13

Mara Salvatrucha 13, commonly referred to as "MS," "MS-13," "MSX3," or "MSXIII," was designated as a National Gang Strategy priority target group of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1997 due to its propensity for violence and rapid growth. Originally composed of individuals of El Salvadorian heritage, MS-13 now consists of numerous, loosely affiliated autonomous cliques, some of which are highly structured and organized, while most are loose knit with very little formal structure. Although MS groups generally function independently of each other, they pose a serious threat in the United States and abroad due to their propensity for extreme random violence and involvement in myriad criminal activities. The level of criminal sophistication and networking by certain clique members will have direct impact on the types and complexity of

the crimes committed by that clique. MS-13 cliques will engage in varying degrees of drug trafficking, theft, prostitution, and violent criminal activity such as murder, extortion, kidnaping, and drive-by shootings to support their criminal activity and protect their turf from rival gangs. Violence is an intimate part of being a gang member. Some MS-13 members have conducted counter-surveillance on law enforcement personnel to obtain license plate numbers of officers' vehicles.

MS-13 has greatly expanded from its origins in southern California. Migration of MS-13 gang members, based on several factors, has resulted in the emergence of MS-13 cliques in numerous jurisdictions across this country. In 1992-93, MS cliques were established in Los Angeles, Northern Virginia, and Long Island, New York. Today, MS-13 cliques have been confirmed or suspected of operating in at least 31 states and the District of Columbia with an estimated 8000 members. In the mid-1990s, MS-13 members who were deported from the United States, established cliques in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Today, in El Salvador and Honduras alone, an estimated 50,000-70,000 gang members are divided into two major gangs, MS-13 and 18th Street. These gangs pose the greatest criminal threat in each country.

Over the past several years, MS-13 has grown significantly on the East Coast. Many jurisdictions throughout the Washington, DC, metropolitan region, have reported MS-13 members involved in criminal activity. In 1992, three MS-13 gang members from Los Angeles, California, were identified in northern Virginia by law enforcement authorities. Today, an estimated 30 MS-13 cliques and 3000 gang members are active throughout the region. The greater Washington, DC area, and specifically northern Virginia, is now a major hub of MS-13 gang activity. Fairfax County, Virginia, Police Department reports that MS-13 is responsible for, or suspected of, 95 percent of all gang-related crimes (armed robbery, theft, car theft, drug dealing, rape, shootings, and assaults with a baseball bats, knives, and machetes, etc.) committed in the county.

Heavy concentrations of MS-13 cliques have been documented in Long Island, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Travel by MS-13 members between these regions, as well as to and from, Texas, California, and other regions, has been documented. MS-13 gang members travel to other communities to support and participate in MS-13 gang activities, to flee prosecution in criminal investigations, and for social and fraternal motives. Approximately 30-40 MS-13 gang members from Massachusetts moved into the Lakewood, New Jersey area and established a clique that appears to be involved in trafficking cocaine and weapons. The Washington, DC region, specifically northern Virginia, is a primary destination for MS-13 gang members. In one notable event, MS-13 gang members traveled from northern Virginia to Hempstead, New York, and committed a drive-by shooting. The motive for the shooting was simply to demonstrate to local Hempstead MS-13 cliques the bravado necessary to intimidate and combat rival gangs.

Within the Washington, DC region, formal multiple-clique meetings have occurred in attempts to organize area cliques however, inter-clique disputes have prevented any such coordination, but these meetings enabled relationships to form between members of multiple cliques. In the long term, it is reasonable to predict that this is an evolutionary step towards a more formalized central structure.

MS-13 has specific identification signs, symbols, and rules. However, certain rules

may vary between cliques and may change depending on the situation. One commonality between all MS-13 cliques, in the United States and Central America, is that the gang survives and thrives due to aggressive local recruitment efforts. Growth in numbers and strength is MS-13's primary goal. For instance, MS-13 gang members must have some Latino heritage, however, there are now "farm" cliques associated, with the MS-13 that are not Latino. Cliques include juvenile members. The gang is known to recruit Hispanic juveniles as young as elementary school age for membership.

It is anticipated that recent gang suppression efforts in Central America will increase legal and illegal immigration of MS-13 gang members to communities with existing MS-13 populations in the United States. Based on current trends and patterns of MS-13 activity in the United States and Central America, it is predictable that MS-13 will continue to spread and grow in numbers across this Nation, including the Washington, DC region. Violent crime associated with continued expansion of MS-13 is most predictable.

Only through nationally-focused investigations calling upon Federal law, will there be a cessation to MS-13's continuing growth in America.

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HONORING MR. ALFREDO B.  
LAGMAY, SR.

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss and honor the life of Mr. Alfredo B. Lagmay, Sr.

Mr. Lagmay was truly one of America's heroes. Mr. Lagmay came to this country from his native Philippines in 1918. He later went on to serve in our armed forces, where he was a prisoner of war (POW), a survivor of the Death March of Bataan, and a veteran of World War II and the Korean War.

After his distinguished 31-year career in the United States Military where he was awarded the Bronze Star, Mr. Lagmay moved with his family to Orange County. Mr. Lagmay was a valued member of the community and served as an inspiration to all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Alfredo Lagmay. I am exceedingly proud to honor him for his courageous service to our country and for the honorable life he led as a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

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IN MEMORIAM OF CPL. ROBERT  
"BOBBY" D. ROBERTS

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, it is with the deepest sadness that I report the death of Corporal Robert D. Roberts, a native of Winter Park, Florida, who died in service to our Nation on November 22nd while serving in Iraq.

I extend my deepest sympathy to his widow Jill, his 3 year old son Jacob, and his family. Bobby, as he was affectionately known, died