

AG Fitch Urges Support for Legislation to Address Gang Violence

Endorsed by MS Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, and Prosecutors



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Lynn Fitch

(Jackson, Mississippi) Attorney General Lynn Fitch urged the Mississippi Legislature to pass [HB 1165](#) and [SB2710](#), legislation that would give the circuit court original jurisdiction of certain firearm-related offenses for minors, increase penalties for certain transfers of stolen firearms, and create a new criminal penalty for shooting a firearm into a group. This bill has been endorsed by the Mississippi Prosecutors Association, Mississippi Sheriffs' Association, and the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police.

"There are more than 200 gangs in Mississippi, and they recruit minors to do a lot of their dirty work, knowing that punishment is often disproportionate to the severity of the crime," **said Attorney General Lynn Fitch**. "We are taking on this problem by making the penalty fit the crime, both making juvenile recruitment less attractive to gangs and getting criminals off the streets. We are excited to have the endorsement of these important law enforcement groups in this effort to keep our communities safe."

"Police departments, Sheriff's departments, and District Attorney's Offices throughout the State are fed up with the gun violence being committed by juveniles. This bill helps address the issue by giving the Circuit Courts in Mississippi jurisdiction over these gun crimes committed by those under the age of 18 and adds severe penalties for anyone transferring these firearms to any juvenile or transferring firearms that are subsequently used in serious felonies. The Mississippi Prosecutors Association fully supports these efforts and this bill," **said Bryan Buckley, President Mississippi Prosecutors Association and Assistant District Attorney - 12th Circuit Court District**.

"These bills are about accountability and protecting innocent lives. HB 1165 and SB 2710 give law enforcement the tools to confront gun violence and protect our communities—especially churches, schools, and public gathering places," **said Police Chief Billy Seal, President of the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police and Long Beach Chief of Police**.

"The Mississippi Sheriffs Association stands in support with AG Fitch on HB 1165 and SB 2710. Juvenile crime rates have reached an all time high and this legislation is the start of basic needs for law enforcement to combat violent and gun related occurrences by juvenile offenders. We applaud AG Fitch and her firm stance to address this matter," **said Randall Tucker, President of the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association President and Madison County Sheriff**.

HB 1165 was introduced by Representative Jansen Owen and has been sent to the House Judiciary B Committee. SB 2710, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Joey Fillingane and was passed out of the Senate Judiciary B Committee last week.

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