

For Immediate Release

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NEW STUDY SHOWS DROPOUTS COST THE STATE \$1 BILLION EACH YEAR IN JUVENILE CRIME

Study also suggests that savings from reductions in juvenile crime could offset investments in dropout prevention programs

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. – Dropouts cost California \$1.1 billion annually in juvenile crime costs alone, according to a study released today from the California Dropout Research Project (CDRP). The new research also shows that cutting the dropout rate in half would reduce the number of juvenile crimes in California by 30,000 each year.

The study titled “High School Dropouts and the Economic Losses from Juvenile Crime in California” is the first to show the immediate public safety and economic impact of California’s high dropout rates. Previous studies estimated the costs to California from adult crime, as well welfare costs and wages and taxes lost during dropout’s adult years.

“This study underscores the immediate impact dropouts have on both public safety and our state’s economy,” said California Dropout Research Project Director Russell W. Rumberger. “If California could effectively reduce the dropout rate, it could subsequently reduce the juvenile crime rate and its staggering impact on the state budget.”

The study comes in anticipation of Governor Schwarzenegger’s signing of Senate Bill 651, a bill that would require the California Department of Education to produce an annual report on dropouts that would highlight dropout trends and help identify early warning signs. The annual report provision was one of several recommendations from a CDRP policy report issued in 2008 for improving California’s high school graduation rate.

Additional findings from the study include:

- The economic losses from juvenile crime in California amount to **\$8.9 billion** per year.
- High school dropouts are twice as likely to commit crimes as high school graduates.
- Dropouts from a single cohort of California 12-year-olds will generate **\$1.1 billion** in economic losses from juvenile crime and **\$10.5 billion** in economic losses from adult crime over their lifetimes.
- Cutting the dropout rate in half would reduce the number of juvenile crimes in California by 30,000 and save the state **\$550 million** per year.
- Savings from reductions in juvenile crime would help offset the costs of effective programs to reduce dropouts

“Dropout prevention is crime prevention. Schools need better tools for identifying potential dropouts so they can target interventions at the kids who need them most,” said Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, Chairman of the Board of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids – a bipartisan, anti-crime organization led by hundreds of sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys and victims of violence. “I call on the governor to sign SB 651, which will help reduce dropouts and ultimately cut crime.”

The findings are the latest in a series of policy and statistical briefs on California’s dropouts conducted by CDRP, a research program based at the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara.

CDRP is funded by the James Irvine Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. For the complete study and for more information about CDRP, including copies of the complete series of the Project’s research, please visit the CDRP website at: <http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/>.

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Note to Media: Russell W. Rumberger, Director, California Dropout Research Project, is available for interviews and can be contacted directly at 805-683-1445.

