



## MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

### **DARE**

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program offers instruction for students between kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the public-school environment. According to the El Paso County Sheriff's website, deputies are assigned to teach the DARE curriculum in elementary schools throughout the school year. The DARE program includes classroom instruction and skills in resisting illegal drugs & alcohol, prescriptions & over-the-counter drug abuse and the importance of internet safety. The program has been subject to multiple funding cuts and is now in jeopardy.

Many people recognize and appreciate the passion and hard work of the parents, students and DARE officers in their crusade to provide ideas to address the funding shortfall. One of the ideas offered at the August 14<sup>th</sup> town hall meeting was a \$10 fee increase on drug and alcohol related driving offenses and a similar bill idea for a \$5 fee increase was proposed by Senator Suzanne Williams (D-Aurora) at the September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Interim Transportation Legislative Review Committee(TLRC) meeting.

As a member of the TLRC and State Representative for House District 19, I oppose charging *any* additional fees on drug and alcohol related driving offenses to fund DARE. Although the DARE program has been helpful to many students, the January 15, 2003 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office on "Youth Illicit Drug Use Prevention: DARE Long-Term Evaluations and Federal Efforts to Identify Effective Programs" suggested that "DARE had no statistically significant long-term effect on preventing youth illicit drug use".

In 2008, El Paso County voters strongly opposed a 1% sales tax increase that included funding for DARE, 4H and school resource officers. Since the 2008 Safer Community Initiative was defeated by the voters *prior* to our economic downturn by 60.03% to 39.97%, surely many voters today would again strongly reject any fee increases for DARE.

Hopefully DARE supporters will continue to offer ideas to accommodate individual school districts interested in continuing this program. Please join me, Commissioner Lathen and Senator Cadman at our next Town Hall Meeting scheduled October 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am, at the Calhan High School Cafeteria; and, for my Town Hall Meeting with Commissioner Hisey and Senator King at the Fountain Senior Citizen Center, October 17<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and please continue to share your comments and concerns with me about this or any other issues.

***Marsha Looper***

Colorado State Representative HD#19

Website:WWW.GOMARSHA.ORG, 719-238-5600

Email:MarshaLooper@gmail.com