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Statement of Attorney General Mike Hatch Regarding Governor Pawlenty's Executive Order

"The Governor today has demonstrated that as he nears the end of his four year term, he still does not appreciate the depth and severity of the meth epidemic.

Two weeks ago, when Judi Dutcher and I made our proposals on the meth epidemic, Governor Pawlenty's Office claimed that the Governor had addressed issue by placing Sudafed behind the counter. The Administration clearly had no appreciation of the extent of the meth problem.

As we learned in the 90s, we need boots on the ground when it comes to the war on drugs and gangs. The proposal by the Governor today fails to address this issue.

First, he proposes a meth registry where meth dealers will be identified on an internet website. I predict that such a website will effectively become the "Simon Delivers" for meth addicts. Second, he recommends that the Highway Patrol be trained to detect and detain drug smugglers who use the highways. Based upon my working with the Highway Patrol, they already have been trained for such activity. Certainly the Highway Patrol officers who have been dispatched to help the City of Minneapolis know how to deal with drug users and dealers. Finally, Governor Pawlenty proposes to teach counties how to deal with meth children. This again demonstrates that he and his Administration have been isolated from the meth problem in that counties have been on the frontline of dealing with these children for almost 10 years.

The Governor's press conference on the meth epidemic, like his recent speech on college tuition, demonstrates that we have a Governor who is simply out of touch with the problems facing this State and that he is either unwilling or unable to appropriately address them.

Two weeks ago, we pointed out that there were four key components in the war on crime, drugs and gangs in the 90s: 1) the establishment of the 80,000 member Clinton Cop Program in 1995, 2) the establishment of the \$1 billion Byrne Program in 1997, 3) the creation of the \$7 million Minnesota State Gang Strike Force in 1997, and 4) State support for local law enforcement through local government aid.

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Since 2002, the Bush/Pawlenty Administrations have ignored the threat of gangs and drugs in our society. They:

- Cut the Clinton Cop Program by 90 percent, which funded 1,200 cops in Minnesota,
- Cut the Byrne Program by 60 percent,
- Abolished the Minnesota State Gang Strike Force, and
- Cut local government aids.

A University of Chicago study concluded that in 2000, the Clinton Cop Program had prevented 1 million property crimes and 150,000 violent crimes.

The Governor once again gets a bad case of foxhole religion. Six weeks ago, Judi Dutcher and I pointed out that college tuition had gone up 80 percent in eight years and that this Governor broke the promise of every other governor to make college affordable and accessible. In response, he gets foxhole religion and now acknowledges that tuition is excessive. The Governor's response to the meth problem is similarly too little, too late."