WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §61-13-1

§61-13-1. Findings.

(a) The Legislature hereby finds that there is evidence of an increasing incidence of larger scale organized criminal activity and gang activity in various parts of this state and that new statutes are necessary to protect the lives and property of the overwhelming majority of West Virginians who are law-abiding citizens. The evidence presented to the Legislature reflects that persons engaged in larger scale ongoing criminal or gang enterprises are of all ages, multiple racial and ethnic origin, and all pose a rising threat.

(b) The Legislature further finds that there is a tendency among certain of these enterprises to actively recruit, sometimes coercively, people into joining such organizations as well as organized efforts to intimidate witnesses who may be in a position to offer testimony regarding the organized criminal enterprises and that such behavior cannot be tolerated.

(c) The Legislature further finds that lawful use of public nuisance and forfeiture laws can substantially aid in a reduction of larger scale organized criminal enterprises.

(d) The Legislature further finds that criminal statutes tailored to the particular problems represented by such organized criminal enterprises combined with community education and existing alternative sentencing laws can aid in reducing this new threat.

WV Legislature