

## ***\$200,000 earmark for tattoo removal in Burbank, California***

The FY 2009 Omnibus provides \$200,000 for Tattoo Removal Violence Prevention Outreach Program in Burbank, California.

Located in Burbank, California, Providence Holy Cross Foundation, has been performing laser tattoo removal treatments for over 8 years and performed over 9,000 tattoo removal treatments. This program offers former gang members or anti-socialists the opportunity to have a gang-related tattoo removed.<sup>1</sup>

While this program's goals are certainly laudable, tattoo removal should not be the responsibility of the federal government, which is currently under serious financial strain. The U.S. national debt now exceeds \$10.8 trillion, the largest in the history. That means almost \$35,000 in debt for each and every man, woman and child in the United States. This amendment would strike the \$200,000 earmark for tattoo removal.

## **The \$200,000 Tattoo Removal Earmark Goes To A Tattoo Removal Foundation With Nearly \$3 Million In Revenue In 2007.**

According to its IRS Form 990 the Providence Holy Cross Foundation has substantial financial resources. The Foundation reported annual revenue of \$2,902,874, cash on hand of \$123,987, savings and temporary cash investments of \$98,449, and total net assets of over \$4 million at the end of 2007, the latest year for which data are available. This does not exactly paint a picture of a foundation in dire financial need.<sup>2</sup>

## **This Earmark Would Benefit 142 Ex-Gang Members**

According to the foundation's website, they charge approximately \$875-\$1,400 to remove a tattoo, (\$175/session with it taking 5-8 treatments for complete removal). Based on this information, the \$200,000 earmark would only be able to treat 142 patients (depending on the 8- week treatment).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.providence.org/losangeles/services/tattooremoval/default.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Providence Holy Cross Foundation. 2007 form 990.

<http://www.guidestar.org/pqShowGsReport.do?partner=guidestar&npoId=100314299>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.providence.org/losangeles/services/tattooremoval/tattoo\\_pay.htm](http://www.providence.org/losangeles/services/tattooremoval/tattoo_pay.htm)

While it is important for ex-gang members to be provided the opportunity to have their tattoos removed, it is not the responsibility for the federal government.