



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

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Ninety nine police officers have lost their lives this year, 44 of them from gunfire. There has been a 78% increase in shooting deaths compared to last year and ambush style attacks have increased as well.

In the month of October alone five officers have been killed, three here in California. The murderers of these police officers are exactly the types of criminals Proposition 57 seeks to release back into our communities. Who is going to interact with these criminals who benefit from an early release? That could be anyone, anywhere, at any time, but one thing is certain, our women and men in uniform will be face to face with these offenders. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Sergeant Steve Owen, Palm Springs Police Officers Jose Vega and Lesley Zerebny met their deaths from two criminals who had been in and out of prison.

How much crime is an average Californian expected to accept while we experiment at the ballot box? It is a basic human right not live under the siege and tyranny of criminals. Over and over again Californians are faced with ballot measures to improve the lives of convicted criminals disguised as 'crime prevention and/or public safety'. This November is no different, in support of Proposition 57; the San Francisco Chronical described it as an opportunity to "encourage nonviolent offenders to use their prison time to improve themselves." That's sounds so simple, so idyllic, that non-violent offenders will now participate in rehabilitative programs because finally there is an incentive to do so. Proponents would have you believe that now misguided thieves, rapists, and burglars will get that missing message that will put them back on the straight and narrow.

The Los Angeles Times also recommends voting yes on Proposition 57 and their angle on this measure is it's a "much needed check on prosecutorial power." Make no mistake, California media has decided who the "bad guys" are and it is not the criminals, it is prosecutors and police officers. When decriminalization and shorter penalties are the goals, proponents must declare law enforcement the enemy since it is our responsibility to arrest and prosecute the very criminals our Governor would like released. Despite what the LA Times may print, our current system of criminal justice does have checks and balances. The U.S. Constitution, the State Constitution along with numerous ethical restriction and guidelines provide a framework for criminal charges.

Victims of crime generally have two questions for a deputy district attorney, how many times will I have to come to court and when is he/she going to get out. If Prop 57 passes, no District Attorney in the State will be able to answer that second question by relying on what sentence the judge has imposed. The answer will depend on how crowded the prison is, it will depend on what the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) recommends, and it will depend on the defendant's participation in programs. Yes, it will give the CDCR the Constitutional authority to reduce sentences for "good behavior."

Part of the bamboozling of the public is the packaging of this proposition as giving an opportunity for reform to non-violent offenders. Here are the crimes the Governor believes are non-violent and therefore eligible for reduced sentences: rape by intoxication, rape of an unconscious person, human trafficking involving sex act with minors, drive-by shooting, assault with a deadly weapon, taking a hostage, domestic violence involving trauma, supplying a firearm to a gang member, lewd acts with a child, hate crime causing physical injury, failing to register as sex offender, arson causing great bodily injury, felon obtaining a firearm, discharging a firearm on school grounds, and false imprisonment of an elder.

Read that list again and look for all the crimes which target vulnerable victims. The criminals who enslave and sell minors, who rape women and men after they're rendered helpless, criminals who harm children and the elderly, these are criminals who will be released back into our communities early, based on participation in a program. This proposition will also overturn key provisions of Marsy's Law, the Three-Strikes Law, the Victims' Bill of Rights, Californians Against Sexual Exploitation Act, and the Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act, all of which were enacted by Californians to protect victims and prevent further victimization.

Proposition 57 will only compound the effects of Proposition 47- The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, which passed in November 2014. Proposition 47 reduced many felonies to misdemeanors, including theft and drug offenses, that directly affect the quality of life in a community. Prior to the passage of Proposition 47, California was experiencing a ten-year trend of decreasing crime, as was the rest of the nation. After the passage of Prop 47, California's crime rates have increased (7% in Visalia) while the rest of the country has seen property crime reductions. Prop 47 has not lived up to its name, and neither will Prop 57.

Your local law enforcement partners have made great strides in the last few years to reduce gang-related violence, to reduce gun violence, and to address the human trafficking tragedy and sex crimes in our communities. Proposition 57 threatens public safety through the early release of violent criminals and straining resources that force us to become more reactive, rather than proactive to prevent crime and maintain our quality of life.

This act will not promote public safety. The very population the Governor is seeking to release has a return to prison rate of nearly 50%. This is according to CDCR's own

statistics not partisan politics. This is yet another gamble on crime disguised as public safety, we don't think 50% is a safe bet.

Every single day deputy district attorneys answer "ready for the people" and every day (and night) Visalia Police Officers start their shifts "clear for calls," with the intent to make our community safe. Please join us in voting NO on Prop 57.

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Jason Salazar  
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