



Riverside Police Officers' Association

1965 Chicago Avenue Suite B Riverside, CA 92507

Office: (951) 784 – 1034 Fax: (951) 784 – 0297

Website: www.rpoa.org Email: rpoa@mail@sbcglobal.net



Governor Schwarzenegger,

August, 2009

We at the Riverside Police Officers' Association would like to strongly oppose the early release of convicted felons due to budgetary issues. This is a short-sighted approach that demonstrates a lack of understanding of crime and its affects on the community. The recent federal court's opinion is unreasonable and unsafe.

First, we who work day in and day out in the criminal justice system see that it takes quite a bit for someone to end up in state prison. Inmates typically are not there due to just one "mistake." We work hard for our victims and arrest, and re-arrest, and re-arrest those that break the law and affect our community. It often takes arrest after arrest, with a corresponding victim after victim, before most criminals finally get a state prison sentence. All of our police and sheriff's departments are experiencing shrinking budgets. We already had a thin blue line, and its getting thinner. Yet the government is considering releasing thousands of criminals on top of that?

Law enforcement aside, this idea does not serve justice for our crime victims and others in the community. Our victims can incur medical expenses, fix damages, pay to increase their security, and lose wages due to hospitalization or court testimony. Our victim services personnel try to address this but their help is limited. Criminals help to create a perception of fear, which only further hurts our economy. Who wants to go shopping, visit their local stores, or use their parks, when the legislature is adding to the crime problem and not helping it? This is about people's quality of life and as you can see it is not so simple as to add what it costs to house an inmate, multiply it many times over, and then release them so we can subtract that number from a faltering state budget. For law enforcement, crime victims, and those trying to live their life and raise a family in California communities, the math does not add up.

The California prison system, overburdened as it is, cannot be the source of a quick fix from those in Sacramento. The early release of prisoners, again who almost always are repeat offenders and violent felons, is not an acceptable resolution to the budget problems. The government's primary responsibility has to be public safety and as a leader in the political arena you have the ability to work on our behalf. Please work against the early release of felons; please protect California communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Townsend

RPOA Political Action Committee Chair

Office: (951) 784 – 1034

Cell: (951) 403 – 4657

Email: rpoapac@sbcglobal.net