



CRIME VICTIMS UNITED

The Voice for Victims and Public Safety

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CRIME VICTIMS UNITED JOINS LAWSUIT TO STOP CDCR'S EARLY RELEASE OF 76,000 DANGEROUS INMATES

"Sentencing decisions belong to the courts, not prison bureaucrats."

SACRAMENTO — Crime Victims United of California (CVUC) today announced the group's new role as co-plaintiff, along with Citizens Against Homicide, in the lawsuit against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to stop emergency rules allowing the release of 76,000 dangerous inmates. Forty-five elected District Attorneys are also party to the suit.

The rules, announced by CDCR on April 30, increase "good time" release credits, whereby inmates convicted of violent crimes earn one day of good conduct credit for every two days served — allowing them to reduce their sentence by up to 50%.

"These are dangerous and unjust rules on many levels — the first being that sentencing decisions belong to the courts, not prison bureaucrats," said Nina Salarno Besselman, President of CVUC. "Second, when a victim is told that their offender has been sentenced to a certain number of years in prison, they feel justice has been served. But when that sentence is later cut in half — because the offender did little more than get up in the morning — the victim feels betrayed, scared, and victimized all over again."

"When CDCR passed these reckless and dangerous regulations, they did so as an emergency without any notice to the public or input from the public, including the victims of crime and their next of kin," said District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert. "When we discovered this, I joined with 44 other elected District Attorneys and filed suit against CDCR to give the public and victims their voice and ensure that CDCR complied with the law."

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Joining CVUC at today's event were Shellie Cervantes, Victim Advocate for Citizens Against Homicide, Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, California District Attorneys Association President Vern Pierson, Legal Director for the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation Kent Scheidegger, and crime victims from across the state — including Cindy Craddock-Biletznikoff (great granddaughter of murder victim Lawrence Robert Harrison - Hanford), Michelle Corrigan (daughter of murder victim Christine Holme - San Francisco), Christina Barnes (daughter of murder victim Cindy Ramos - Tracy), Dena Love (sister of murder victim Kevin "Johnny" Ruska), Lance McDonald (father of DUI victim Logan McDonald), Shelby Ricci (girlfriend of DUI victim Logan McDonald), and Kim Egger (mother of human trafficking victim).

"The drastic reduction in time served not only creates a serious public safety risk, but violates victims' rights under Marsy's Law," said El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson, who is also President of the California District Attorneys Association. "And it was implemented with no public comment period. No transparency."

Founded in 1990, Crime Victims United has been dedicated to protecting the rights of victims, supporting and strengthening public safety, and promoting balance in the criminal justice system. To learn more, visit crimevictimsunited.com/.

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