

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Prison Reform Initiative to Save California Taxpayers Billions

Moreno Valley, California, November 8, 2007 - Signature collectors have hit the streets in California to qualify the Sentencing and Parole Reform Statute for the November 2008 General Election. By enacting straightforward sentencing and parole guidelines, this initiative will save California taxpayers in the low billions of dollars and will eliminate the need to build new prisons or to send California prisoners out of state to serve their sentences.

Sponsored by Families United for Prison Reform, the Sentencing and Parole Reform Statute continues the trend established by the U.S. District Courts to put a cap on the overcrowding of the California prisons. Currently, California prisons are operating at 198.7% capacity, with nearly a one-to-one inmate to staff ratio. The State of California has been unable resolve this dilemma over the last decade, and watched the prison population grow 84% while the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation budget has nearly tripled, rivaling state spending for Higher Education.

These alarming statistics, coupled with previous Federal Court findings that California prison healthcare system is responsible for numerous preventable deaths due to lack of appropriate medical care and is not in compliance with the United States Constitution in its care of the mentally ill, caused the U.S. District Court in July of this year to convene a Federal Three Judge Panel to review and rule on this crisis.

In an emergency response to the pressure created by the Federal Courts, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the California Legislature passed AB 900, with a price tag projected in excess of \$7 billion dollars. Unfortunately, the Federal judges found that this legislation, which primarily promotes prison expansion, either will not, or likely will not, alleviate the problems at hand.

The Sentencing and Parole Reform Statute, however, looks to solve the same problems and save billions of taxpayer dollars by reducing the current and future prison population by approximately 35% through streamlining California's current sentencing and parole laws. The proponent has until February 25, 2008 to collect the 433,971 signatures needed to qualify the initiative for the ballot.

ABOUT: Families United for Prison Reform - is a California public benefit nonprofit corporation 501(c)4 with the specific purpose to increase public safety and reduce crime and violence both within the State's prison system and outside in society by informing, educating, and uniting families and friends of prisoners, and seeks to promote legislation which focuses primarily upon prison reform and rehabilitation programs which will, in turn, further the common good and general welfare of the people of the community.

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