



CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



CALIFORNIA STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION



CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS OF CALIFORNIA

**For Immediate Release:
September 29, 2011**

**Contact:
Kathy Fairbanks (916) 443-0872**

Sheriffs, County Supervisors, Chief Probation Officers Join Governor Brown, Say Ballot Measure Needed to Protect Funds for Local Governments to Manage New Offender Population

Sacramento – At a news conference with Governor Jerry Brown and other law enforcement officials today in Sacramento, sheriffs, county supervisors and probation officers called on state lawmakers to place an initiative on the November 2012 ballot to ensure a protected funding source to counties who will be taking over responsibility for monitoring, tracking and incarcerating low-risk offenders who were previously the responsibility of the state. This change goes into effect October 1. County and local law enforcement leaders say this ballot measure is vital to protect public safety.

In the wake of a US Supreme Court decision requiring the state to reduce its prison population by 33,000 offenders, the state acted to move responsibility for many low-level offenders (nonserious, nonviolent, nonsexual) to counties for incarceration, monitoring and rehabilitation. The state budget provided funding to counties for one budget year, through June 2012. Without a constitutional guarantee of reliable, ongoing funding, county law enforcement officials worry they would be left with no resources to manage their new offender population.

At the news conference today, Governor Brown reiterated his strong support for a constitutional ballot measure to provide stable, ongoing funding to pay for these new responsibilities. The California State Sheriffs' Association, California State Association of Counties and the Chief Probation Officers of California agreed.

"The state has to reduce its prison population, these prisoners are coming. The question is whether or not we here at the local level are going to be given the resources to adequately protect the public's safety," said Mark N. Pazin, Sheriff, Merced County and President, California State Sheriffs' Association. "In order to plan for the future and adequately protect the public's safety, local sheriffs and other public safety officials need assurances the money will be there every year. If not, realignment will be a public safety disaster."

"If the state shifts responsibility to provide a service to the county level, the state must provide a reliable revenue source to counties for that expense," said Mike McGowan, Yolo County Supervisor and California State Association of Counties' First Vice President. "We are extremely concerned about the significant new responsibilities the state has imposed on us without any guarantee of ongoing funding that cannot be raided by future legislatures. We stand ready to work side-by-side with the Governor to go to the voters to protect funding for these critical public safety services."

Linda Penner, Chief Probation Officer, Fresno County, and President of the Chief Probation Officers of California said: "If our new responsibilities are adequately funded, constitutionally guaranteed and stable, we can do a better job protecting our communities. That's why we need a ballot measure for November 2012 which will guarantee funding year in and year out." Supervisor David Finigan of Del Norte and CSAC's Second Vice President added: "Giving counties more responsibility for low-level offenders and other services for neglected and abused children and seniors can work. Local governments are more responsible, accountable and better understand local needs. Voters have time and again said they want to keep local funds local, to fund important local services. With this initiative, we want to give voters the opportunity to protect their local services again."

The legislature has until next summer to place a constitutional protection measure on the November 2012 ballot. In the meantime, counties say they are prepared to go to the ballot with their own measure if the legislature fails to act.

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