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Victims' Families of Teen Killers Celebrate Victory for All of California in the Defeat of SB 399

Sacramento – All of California can breathe a sigh of relief today that they are safer, they have saved money, and that murder victims families and law enforcement can sleep a little better tonight. SB 399 went down to defeat yesterday in the California Assembly.

Victims family members, victims' rights groups, District Attorneys, Law Enforcement, and others concerned with public safety worked hard against a sometimes misleading propaganda machine to narrowly defeat this bill that would have potentially freed some of the worst killers in California history, including psychopaths, cop-killers, and mass murderers.

"The bill was also very flawed, and would have unnecessarily opened up a costly and messy series of legal cases. Almost any offender, no matter their crime, would have qualified to be reviewed for release under this bill, their brutal crimes and life sentences notwithstanding," said Daniel Horowitz, renowned defense attorney and television commentator, and widower of a victim of a brutal murder by a teen.

"Most painful of all in this process", said Maggie Elvey, whose husband Ross was murdered by two teens who robbed him and brutally beat him to death, "was the way that the advocates for the teen killers misled legislators and the public about the facts here. The USA is not the only nation that uses life sentences for those rare cases of teens who are dangerous and psychopathic murderers-- many nations do -- and some do much worse by their juvenile offenders that we do. California actually has an enlightened system of juvenile justice with significant protections built in to protect offender rights. SB 399 was only going to put the victims' families and the public through hell, and risk endangering us further. "

The National Organization of Victims of Juvenile Lifers have been calling on Senator Yee, Human Rights Watch and other offender advocates to meet with them to discuss the many ways that specific miscarriages of justice in a few cases can be addressed. Daniel Horowitz submitted a lengthy paper to Senator Yee with specific legal analysis about the flaws of his bill and the other legal channels that exist that can be used to address certain cases they are concerned about.

NOVJL stands with victims and law enforcement in gratitude to all California Legislators who voted NO on this bad public policy proposal, and looks forward to working with all stakeholders, should this issue arise again in the future.

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