

Keep California safe: Help get crime reduction act on November ballot

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The pendulum of California's approach to criminal justice is finally beginning to swing back to favor the victims.

While the last decade has been dominated by measures like Proposition 47 and 57, which give leniency to criminals and made our communities less safe, signatures are currently being gathered to place the appropriately named [Reducing Crime and Keeping California Safe Act of 2018](#) on the November ballot for voters to have a chance to approve.

Supported by local leaders like our District Attorney Dan Dow, this proposition will fix the problems that have emerged across California that the Democrat-controlled Legislature and Gov. Brown have refused to address.

The name of the game for public safety policy by state leaders has been completely focused on inmates and ways to let them out of prison early. Under pressure to meet the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling to reduce California's prison overcrowding, every decision made in Sacramento and put before the voters has been a ploy to reduce the prison population. These so-called criminal justice "reforms" have caused problems with everything from using DNA to solve serious unsolved crimes to skyrocketing shoplifting that has hit businesses across the state.

Sadly, it's little surprise that the California Department of Justice's most recent crime report shows violent crime is [up double digits since 2014](#).

Fortunately, the ballot box will offer an important opportunity for voters to address serious deficiencies. The coalition backing it — including law enforcement, prosecutors, victim rights groups and business retailers — are stepping up to do what is right. Their initiative will do four important things:

- Restore the collection of DNA for many crimes so it can be used to solve rape and murder cases

- Fix the current definition of non-violent crimes that make an inmate eligible for early release
- Reform the parole system that allowed a felon to go in and out of jail [five times in seven months](#) before murdering Whittier Police Officer Keith Boyer
- Reform theft laws so serial thieves cannot steal over and over with impunity.

Advocates for safer streets are right to be optimistic after years of bad criminal policy because there is a very strong chance of voters approving this common-sense measure. One of the strongest arguments for passing it is its provision on DNA evidence. When Proposition 47 passed, it severely reduced the number of crimes that law enforcement is allowed to collect DNA evidence from. This is important because an individual convicted of a drug possession crime could very well be linked using DNA evidence to serious crimes like murder.

A drug conviction allowed law enforcement to find the killer of 80-year old Sophie McAllister [nearly 20 years](#) after her murder in 1989. This is one of many cases solved due to DNA evidence.

But due to passage of Prop 47, the amount of samples in the DNA database [has fallen off a cliff](#) because DNA can no longer be collected in as many crimes, including some drug possession cases. For nearly three years, bills have been brought before the Legislature to reverse this, only to be shot down by liberal Democrats. This protects those who are guilty at the expense of justice for victims. There is no other way to describe it.

The Reducing Crime and Keeping California Safe Act not only restores the collection of DNA, it will prevent felons from getting paroled early.

Proposition 57 shockingly allows for early release of criminals convicted of crimes like rape of an unconscious person, trafficking a child for sex, assault of a peace officer, felony domestic violence. While voters were told it would only apply to “non-violent” crimes, most people would tell you those crimes are extremely serious. Fortunately many of these early releases have not begun yet because Proposition 57 was only recently implemented. All the more reason to fix this problem before it leads to even more dangerous people on our streets.

Even those who do not favor a tough-on-crime approach understand that laws will always need to continue to evolve as problems emerge. The cracks in our current system are clear and it's time to fix them. Hopefully, this November we can undo some serious mistakes that have contributed to rising crime.

Since Sacramento has refused to act, it's time for the people to let their state government know that they want to protect victims —not criminals.