

October 17, 2016

To Larry D. Morse II, State Co-Chair/No on Prop. 57,

On behalf of the Merced City Council, I am writing to inform you of our strong opposition to Proposition 57 – The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016. Proposition 57 would undo four decades of Criminal Justice Reform by allowing the early release of criminals convicted of “non-violent” felonies. It is important to note that the following crimes are classified as “non-violent” in the California Penal Code:

- Rape by intoxication
- Rape of an unconscious person
- Human trafficking involving sex act with minors
- Drive-by shooting
- Assault with a deadly weapon
- Hate crime causing physical injury
- Domestic violence involving trauma
- Arson causing great bodily injury
- Lewd acts upon a child
- False imprisonment of an elder

By enabling early release for these crimes, Proposition 57 would overturn key provisions of the Victims' Bill of Rights, Marsy's Law, and the Californians Against Sexual Exploitation Act. Furthermore, by disregarding sentences imposed by judges for repeat and career criminals, Prop. 57 would treat the worst criminals the same as first-time offenders. In addition, Prop. 57 would give the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation unlimited constitutional authority to reduce sentences for "good behavior," even for inmates previously convicted of murder, mayhem, and rape.

As has been noted by Attorney General Kamala Harris, California is experiencing a marked increase in crime. In the last year:

- Violent Crime has increased by 10.0%.
- Property Crime has increased by 8.1%.
- The Homicide Rate has increased by 9.7%.

Given rising crime levels throughout California, the Merced City Council strongly opposes Proposition 57, which we believe would, if approved, exacerbate the trend toward more crime. We have endorsed the No on 57 Campaign (FPPC ID # 1386627), and we encourage you to stand with us and California Law Enforcement by also coming out in opposition to Proposition 57.

Sincerely,

Stanley P. Thurston, Mayor
City of Merced