



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOoffice

Contact: Michael D. Schwartz
Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: (805) 654-5082
E-mail: michael.schwartz@ventura.org
Approved: MDS *MDS*
Date: August 9, 2019
Release No.: 19-092

District Attorney Opposes Felon Jury Service Legislation

District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today his strong opposition to legislation that would allow felons to serve on juries. Senate Bill 310, introduced by Senator Nancy Skinner of Oakland, would allow felons, including those convicted of serious crimes such as murder, rape, child molest, and gang crimes, to serve as jurors. The bill as currently written would allow those who have demonstrated their disregard for the most basic of our laws to sit in judgment of others, and would force other jurors to spend days, weeks or months in the jury room with dangerous criminals.

California law has prohibited felons from sitting on juries since 1880. The current bill would prohibit only those who are currently in prison or jail from serving, and would allow all other felons, including those on probation and parole, to serve as jurors.

Many prosecutors statewide agree that some persons previously convicted of felonies should be eligible for jury service, but only if they have fully paid their debt to society, including successful completion of probation or parole, and have remained crime free for a reasonable period of time thereafter. We would support amendments to the bill with reasonable restrictions such as excluding murders, sex offenders, and persons convicted of violent felonies.

###

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

Follow the Ventura County District Attorney's Office on Twitter @VenturaDAOoffice