



**GREGORY D. TOTTE**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Ventura County Residents Accept Diversion in Vandalism of Black Lives Matter Signs**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that misdemeanor vandalism charges are approved for filing against Jeffrey Moore (DOB 4/27/62) and Darrin Stone (DOB 1/25/60), both of Thousand Oaks, related to their roles in damaging a “BLM” (Black Lives Matter) sign posted on private property in Thousand Oaks on different occasions. Both Moore and Stone have agreed to participate in the Ventura County District Attorney’s Misdemeanor Diversion Program for their roles in the vandalism of the sign.

At the end of May 2020, a sign reading “BLM” was placed on the rear fence of a private residence facing Westlake Boulevard. On June 11, Moore defaced the sign by spray painting an “A” over the “B” on the sign. On June 13, Stone cut down a second sign that had been placed on the fence and carried it away. On June 19, Stone cut down a third sign that had been placed in the same location and carried it away. The Ventura County Sheriff’s Office conducted an investigation into the incidents and ultimately cited Moore and Stone for vandalism of the “BLM” signs.

Moore and Stone are eligible to participate in the District Attorney’s Misdemeanor Diversion Program. Upon successful completion of the program, the vandalism charges faced by each will not be filed with the court.

The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office Misdemeanor Diversion Program was initiated in 2017 in an effort to reduce recidivism by providing meaningful education and rehabilitation to eligible individuals. All cases are reviewed by an attorney to determine if there is proof beyond a reasonable doubt to prove the alleged criminal charge. If so, the program is offered to those with minimal or no criminal history who are facing certain low level misdemeanors, and provides offenders the opportunity to complete rehabilitative classes and pay restitution in lieu of formal prosecution. The program

addresses the individual's particular criminal actions and is funded entirely by offenders, with neither cost nor revenue to the District Attorney's Office or the County of Ventura. Applicants who cannot afford the program may apply for a fee reduction. Since inception, this program has been offered to 1,959 people and 1,170 have enrolled. Of those enrolled, 983 have successfully completed the program and 942 (95.8%) have not reoffended once they completed the program. Similar programs currently operate in various California counties, including San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange.

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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.

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