

State to Release Thousands of Felons; Prison Gates Open January 25, Says Los Angeles Police Protective League

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 15, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Starting January 25th, thousands of dangerous criminals will be released early from California state prisons – and for the first time in nearly 30 years, sent back to local communities without any supervision,” stated the Los Angeles Police Protective League.

“The County of Los Angeles will be dramatically impacted, with over 5,000 felons to be released to our city,” said Los Angeles Police Protective League (LAPPL) President Paul M. Weber. “What concerns law enforcement is that unlike the current program, where released inmates have been placed on parole, restricted from certain types of activities, or provided various community-based rehabilitative resources, these inmates will be completely unsupervised.”

“The only condition for these released inmates is that local law enforcement officers are allowed to search them without a warrant. However, since local law enforcement will not know who these people are, that is a virtually useless provision,” Weber said.

“We can expect crime to go up as a result of this massive release, considering California has the highest recidivism rate in the nation, with seven out of ten parolees reoffending then returning to the prison system,” added Weber.

For months the LAPPL has been warning the public that the prison gates are going to fly open in order to close the state budget deficit.

“Now we know that January 25th is the date that the state of California has decided to begin jeopardizing public safety with no perceivable financial benefit,” continued Weber. “It is a virtual certainty that the releases’ overall cost and risk to local communities are going to far outweigh any initial savings for the state. Each incident of crime costs taxpayers, on average, \$18,000 for arrest and prosecution. Thus, the early release program will cost taxpayers more in the long run based on the number of inmates to be released and standard recidivism rates. On top of the wasted dollars there is a much greater toll – the pain and suffering of victims, their families and our communities.”

Weber said he disagrees with state officials who will attempt to portray some of the inmates being released as low-risk and nonviolent. “The people being considered for release are convicted felons, many of whom have plea bargained their crimes down to lesser offenses. A large number of them are parole violators – in other words, they are people who have already proven they cannot remain law abiding after being released from prison.”

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