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PRESS RELEASE

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**Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer Issues Statement Regarding
“Poison Pill” Provisions that Would Repeal Retail Theft Legislation if
Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act
is Approved by California Voters**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer issued the following statement regarding “poison pill” provisions that would repeal retail theft legislation if Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act is approved by California voters:

Proposition 47 was sold to voters as the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, but it did nothing to make our neighborhoods and schools safer. Instead, it made us less safe.

The Governor and the Legislature’s focus is not on our neighborhoods or our schools.

Their priority is mass decarceration – and making sure no one is held accountable for their actions. As a result, we are seeing rising crime, more drug-related deaths across California, and billions of dollars in stolen goods being carted out the front doors of stores by thieves while hardworking Californians are standing in line waiting to pay for their items – at inflated costs as retailers desperately try to make up for their losses due to rampant theft.

The last ten years have seen a significant decline in public safety. According to the Pacific Research Institute’s Study Paradise Lost: Crime in the Golden State 2011-2021, “more Californians are dead, have been sexually assaulted, and are the victims of traumatic injury,” than if legislative and public policy efforts including Proposition 47, as well as Assembly Bill 109 (realignment that released serious offenders into our local communities) and Proposition 57 (early release of prison inmates) had not occurred. Instead of boosting prison capacity and increasing rehabilitation prospects, California opted to release prisoners who were unsafe to release, essentially decriminalized drugs and theft, and handcuffed prosecutors from charging enhancements for gangs and guns. Inmates are being released back into our communities as a result of these dangerous legislative efforts – and they are reoffending.

*Californians have had enough. Voters in the hundreds of thousands have signed petitions to have the **Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act**, on the November ballot for voters to make necessary changes to Proposition 47 – which can only be made through voter initiative – and return accountability for the criminals who are terrorizing our communities.*

Now, leaders of the California Legislature are trying to sabotage those efforts through the same deceptive tactics that brought us Proposition 47 – and the resulting lawlessness and rampant theft across our state.

*On Tuesday, the Senate and Assembly Public Safety Committees are expected to insert “poison pill” language into anti-retail theft legislation that would force voters to make a ridiculous choice between approving the much needed reforms to Proposition 47 by approving the **Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act** knowing that a yes vote for the initiative would result in any current legislative efforts to address retail theft being nullified – or rejecting the initiative and settling for a mediocre set of “reforms” that at best make modest strides to address retail theft and at worst do nothing at all to address a multi-billion problem we all know exists.*

Among those laws that would be automatically nullified if the initiative passes is much needed legislation to allow retail theft cases committed in multiple counties to be consolidated into a single prosecution handled by one District Attorney’s Office, which would result in more efficient prosecutions, more timely restitution of victims, and expedited accountability for thieves.

The Legislature’s Retail Theft Package fails to address the number one issue with retail theft: holding serial and professional thieves who repeatedly commit shoplifting and petty theft accountable. The only way to fix that issue is for voters to amend Proposition 47 to reinstate the crime of Petty Theft with Priors.

Voters must also be heard on the issue of aggregation, the ability to aggregate or total the value of multiple thefts to meet the \$950 threshold for grand theft or burglary. The Legislature’s Retail Theft Package attempts to address this issue on the margins, but only the voters can truly fix the problem by amending Proposition 47 at the ballot box.

In 2014, Californians voted for Proposition 47 because they believed the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act would make us safer. They couldn’t have been more wrong.

We can’t allow the Legislature to once again to use the same old deceptive tactics to trick voters – and we can’t continue to be wrong about public safety.

With the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act, voters have the opportunity to once again hold criminals accountable – and make our neighborhoods and our schools safer. Let’s get it right this time.

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