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Assemblymember Cooper Issues Statement on California Appellate Court Ruling on Proposition 57

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove) released the following statement regarding a recent ruling made by a California Appellate Judge on the early release of a violent parolee:

“Last Thursday, a California Appellate judge ruled that a man originally sentenced to 35 years to life in state prison is now eligible for early release under Proposition 57, the California Parole for Non-Violent Criminals and Juvenile Court Trial Requirements Initiative.

The felon was convicted of stabbing his girlfriend with a butcher knife, forcibly molesting his 11-year-old niece and gang raping a 17-year-old pregnant teenager.

It pains me to describe these offenses but it’s imperative that I do – because there is something grossly wrong with current law pertaining to these offenses. Under Proposition 57, the courts have ruled that violent sexual offenders and even a felon that stabbed his girlfriend is considered a non-violent criminal.

This ruling marks the second time in the past year that a court has ruled that pedophiles and rapists will be considered for early release from prison (proponents promised voters this would never happen) under the highly misrepresented Proposition 57.

While Proposition 57 promised to keep violent offenders in prison, the list of crimes considered as non-violent are unimaginable. The list includes pimping a child, beating a spouse and raping an unconscious or disabled person.

Victims’ rights groups and legal experts all warned the initiative was too risky and would likely lead to the early release of some of society’s worst criminals. The electorate was misled and they will ultimately be the ones to pay the price if we don’t start an honest conversation about the realities of the impacts of Proposition 57.

This conversation is long overdue. It’s time for legislative leaders, criminal justice reform groups and public safety experts to come together to address this issue.”

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Assemblymember Cooper represents the Cities of Sacramento, Elk Grove, Galt, and Lodi.