ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION 20

“He slashed at me with a knife and tried to kill me,” says Terra Newell, who survived a knife attack by the sociopath Dirty John. “It was brutal and terrifying — but in California, his attack wasn’t a violent crime.”

Under California law, assault with a deadly weapon is classified a “nonviolent” offense — along with date rape, selling children for sex, and 19 other clearly violent crimes.

All are “nonviolent” under the law.

Proposition 20 fixes this.

“Nonviolent” crimes in California include domestic violence, exploding a bomb, shooting into a house with the intent to kill or injure people, raping an unconscious person and beating a child so savagely it could result in coma or death.

Sex traffickers typically beat, rape and drug their victims before selling them for sex. But in California, trafficking is a “nonviolent” offense.

Even hate crimes are considered “nonviolent.”

As a result, thousands of offenders convicted of these 22 violent crimes, including sex offenders and child molesters, are eligible for early prison release, WITHOUT serving their full sentences, and WITHOUT their victims being warned.

Proposition 20 PREVENTS the early release of violent offenders and sexual predators by making these 22 violent crimes “violent” under the law, and requires that victims be notified when their assailants are set free.
Proposition 20’s “full sentence” provision applies ONLY to violent inmates who pose a risk to public safety, regardless of race or ethnicity. It does NOT apply to drug offenders and petty criminals, and does NOT send more people to prison.

“Claims that Proposition 20 will fill our prisons with thousands of new inmates are false,” says Michele Hanisee, president of the Association of Deputy District Attorneys. “It doesn’t send one new person to prison. It simply requires violent offenders and sexual predators to complete their full sentences.”

This protects victims and gives offenders longer access to counseling, anger management and other rehabilitation programs.

“Proposition 20 protects children against physical abuse and sexual exploitation,” says Klaas Kids Foundation founder Marc Klaas. “Trafficking children will finally be recognized as the violent crime it is."

Proposition 20 provides additional protection against violent crime by allowing DNA collection from persons convicted of theft or drug offenses, which multiple studies show helps solve more serious and violent crimes like rape, robbery and murder.

California reduced penalties for theft in 2014. Since then, major theft has increased 25%, costing grocers, small business owners, retailers, homeowners and consumers billions of dollars. Shoplifting has become so common it’s seldom reported.

Proposition 20 strengthens sanctions against serial theft by habitual criminals — to help stop car break-ins, shoplifting, home burglaries and other major theft.

California’s drug addiction crisis is fueling much of this theft. By strengthening sanctions against theft, Proposition 20 helps get addicts (who are 75% of California’s homeless population) off the streets and into the substance abuse and mental health programs they desperately need.

Voting “YES” on Proposition 20 is a vote against hate and violence.
It's a vote for children, victims and survivors.

It's a vote for equal justice and a safer California.

Patricia Wenskunas
Founder
Crime Survivors, Inc.

Nina Salarno Besselman
President
Crime Victims United of California

Christine Ward
Director
Crime Victims Alliance