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**For Immediate Release**

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## **DA Issues Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 94, Calls on Lawmakers to Vote ‘No’**

### ***Bill Allows Early Release for Murders Who Received Life Sentences***

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) today strongly criticized Senate Bill 94, proposed legislation that would allow a person convicted of murder or multiple murders with a special circumstance to petition a court for resentencing, if the killer has served at least 25 years of their life sentence and the offense was committed before June 5, 1990. The bill would permit some of the most violent and dangerous California murderers to elude the punishment of life without the possibility of parole for which they were originally sentenced. These violent killers would be eligible to be resentenced for their murders simply due to the passage of time.

“SB 94 would be an unwarranted gift of lenity to some of the ‘worst of the worst’ of California’s murderers currently incarcerated in prisons across the state, including San Diego defendants convicted of murder and attempted rape,” said DA Stephan, who sent a formal letter of opposition to the Chair of the Assembly Public Safety Committee. “For some of these killers, this law would reduce their sentence and move them from California’s prison system into our communities, unfairly re-traumatizing victims and their families. How is justice served when people who mercilessly torture and murder human beings and are duly convicted and sentenced in a court of law, and then get their sentence undone without any consideration of the irreplaceable loss and pain to their victims?”

In her letter, DA Stephan outlined several aspects to the bill that led to her opposition:

- SB 94 includes no requirement that the killer show any remorse or rehabilitation.
- SB 94 will re-traumatize victims and their families.
- SB 94 fails to fully consider the appeals and other post-conviction relief available to convicted killers.
- SB 94 tips the scale by forcing judges to lean towards resentencing in each case by requiring “great weight” be given to certain factors rather than allowing an objective decision.
- SB 94 will unduly burden the court system by requiring judges to reconsider sentencing of decades-old cases.

**The bill is making its way through the legislature and will be heard next in the Appropriations Committee tomorrow, September 1.**

“The bill severely limits a sentencing judge’s discretion to deny the petition for resentencing,” DA Stephan said. “SB 94 stacks the deck in favor of violent murderers over victims and community safety by mandating that judges afford great weight to mitigating evidence offered by the convicted murderer. SB 94 is written so that the scales of justice are tipped in favor of the defendant.”

Mitigating evidence that benefits the defendant would be given greater weight than the aggravating evidence that negatively impacts the defendant’s petition for release. Specifically, SB 94 mandates that the resentencing court afford great weight to evidence that the convicted murderer suffered intimate partner violence, sexual violence or human trafficking; experienced childhood trauma, suffered military-related trauma connected to the offense, suffered cognitive impairment, intellectual disability or mental illness, or was a youth at the time of the offense.

The law does not allow great weight to be given to aggravating factors such as the calculated and cruel nature of the murder, the fact that two or more people were killed, that the victim left behind orphaned children, or that the murders were sadistic in their nature.

Killers convicted in San Diego County who would be eligible to petition for resentencing under SB 94 include:

**David Alan Weeding** – On May 20, 1988, Weeding knocked on the door of Vickie P.’s apartment, claiming to be sent by management to check for leaks. Weeding grabbed the victim’s arm and began to attack her. She was wrestled to the ground and the defendant held a knife to her throat, cutting off her clothes. As this was occurring, Vickie’s husband entered the apartment. Weeding grabbed the knife from the floor and charged at him. Vickie ran outside for help while her husband struggled with Weeding. Weeding stabbed the victim in the back and chest several times, killing him. Weeding was convicted by a jury of murder with special circumstances, attempted rape and first-degree burglary. He was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. Weeding committed this heinous murder after being released from prison early while serving a sentence for prior sexual assaults.

**Arthur Chris Burbridge** - On September 21, 1978, Claire L.’s body was found in a hotel room. Her ankles were tied together with nylon stockings and there was blue bandana around her neck along with another nylon stocking. She had been choked to death. Claire’s checkbook was on the bed and in the signature line, the killer wrote, “God gives, God taketh away.” Six days later, Shirley B.’s body was found on the side of the road. A piece of plastic clothesline was tied around her neck. The cause of death was also asphyxiation. Shirley’s body had drag marks on her back indicating that she had been dragged headfirst to the side of the road where her body was covered with a blanket.

Read the DA’s letter sent in opposition to SB94 [here](#).

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***About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office***

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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