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For Immediate Release

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Milestone Reached in California's SB 618 Prisoner Reentry Program

San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie M. Dumanis and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary Matthew Cate today presided over the first graduation ceremony for participants of San Diego's prisoner reentry program that helps non-violent offenders successfully enter back into the community.

Known as SB 618, it is a comprehensive case management program created in 2007 through multiple-agency collaboration among the County, State and community-based organizations.

"Elected officials, law enforcement officials and community members all understand the importance of reducing recidivism," DA Dumanis said. "Helping offenders through SB 618 in turn helps us. It makes our communities safer by promoting success, recovery and improvement for offenders. This event is a milestone for the program."

The reentry program does not alter the length of the participant's sentence, but uses that time in prison to provide adequate treatment of drug and alcohol addiction and improve the prisoner's vocational and educational skills. In providing case management throughout the participant's sentence and up until 18 months after their release, participants are encouraged to successfully complete their terms of parole and become a viable member of the community. SB 618 is currently active at two state institutions, Richard J. Donovan State Prison and California Women's Institution.

"I would like to congratulate the inmates who successfully graduated from this program and are now discharged from parole as well as the many community organizations who have made this program a success," said Matthew Cate, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "This program demonstrates the importance of community support in helping inmates succeed and reducing recidivism."

More than 35 graduates attended the ceremony after having been discharged from their parole. San Diego County is the first in the state to initiate this cooperative effort between the District Attorney's Office, Reentry Roundtable, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Parole Offices, Probation Department, Sheriff's Department, Public Defender's Office and Superior Court.

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