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For Immediate Release

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Placement Hearings for Sexually-Violent Predators Closed to the Public Once Again

DA to Re-Introduce Legislation to Keep SVP Hearings Open and Accessible

Another placement hearing for a sexually-violent predators (SVP) has been ordered closed to the public, denying victims, victim' rights groups, the media and other concerned citizens the ability to hear arguments for and against the SVP's release into the community. On December 1, a Superior Court Judge ordered the courtroom closed to the public for hearings in the Steven Dejarlais SVP case. Dejarlais, 52, is an SVP who was convicted of rapes in 1994 and 1996.

Prosecutors say they are seeing motions to close SVP hearings in San Diego County being granted with much more frequency. Earlier this year, hearings regarding the proposed release and placement of SVP Alvin Ray Quarles, 57, otherwise known as the "Bolder-Than-Most" rapist, were held behind closed doors in San Diego County Superior Court.

A motion was also filed to close an upcoming hearing on December 11 for a petition for SVP Douglas Badger's supervised release. Defense attorneys argued that the SVP law does not provide the public a right to object to the closing of SVP hearings. Badger, 78, was convicted of sexually-assaulting male hitchhikers dating back to 1974.

"As district attorney, I hear the pain from victims who've been terrorized by a sexual predator but are left in the dark and not able to learn pertinent information guaranteed to them by our open courts system," said District Attorney Summer Stephan. "That's why we will once again sponsor important legislation that supports the principles of democracy and transparency in our justice system by making sure court hearings for sexually violent predators are open to the public."

SB1023 was introduced by Senator Patricia Bates earlier this year and sponsored by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. The bill would require SVP proceedings to be in open court, on the record, unless compelling and extraordinary circumstances justify the closing the courtroom in the public. SB-1023 did not have a committee hearing in the Legislature due to a shortened legislative session brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The San Diego DA's Office will be working with

Sen. Bates' Office to re-introduce a version of the bill during the upcoming legislative session.

Badger is seeking release from treatment in the state hospital and placement in the community for a fourth time, alleging that he is no longer likely to reoffend. Mr. Badger successfully petitioned for release in 2005. He was placed in the community in July 2006 before having his outpatient status revoked in October 2007. Badger re-initiated the release process when he filed a second petition for release in April 2013. In August 2013, the court granted his petition for release but Badger withdrew his petition before he was placed in the community. He filed a third petition for release again in 2018 but withdrew his petition the following year before he was placed in the community.

Dejarlais was committed to the state hospital for an indeterminate term as a Sexually Violent Predator in 2012. Mr. Dejarlais filed his petition seeking release from the state hospital in 2019. The evidentiary hearing on his release petition is set to start on December 16th. The hearing is closed to the public.

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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.