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For Immediate Release

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## DA's Objection Leads to Withdrawal of San Diego County as a Placement for Sexually Violent Predator

This morning, Humboldt County Superior Court Judge John Feeny vacated an October 9, 2020 hearing to determine whether the court would place a 40-year-old sexually violent predator from Humboldt County at a location in San Diego County. Officials with Liberty Healthcare and the State Department of Hospitals had submitted a proposal that listed a Pauma Valley address as a location to place sexually violent Predator Joshua Cooley. Cooley is currently being housed at Coalinga State Hospital. He was convicted of assaulting two 12-year-old girls in separate cases. This was the first time an out-of-county sexually violent predator was recommended for placement in San Diego County at a location that was already found unsuitable by a San Diego Superior Court Judge.

District Attorney Summer Stephan vehemently objected and called for withdrawal of the proposal in a letter sent earlier this month to Liberty Healthcare and the State Department of Hospitals.

Following DA Stephan's objections to the placement in San Diego County, Liberty Healthcare said the recommendation was made in error, clarifying this week that while they listed the Pauma Valley location as one that exists for potential placement, they were not recommending it for Cooley. Additionally, The Department of State Hospitals also clarified that they no longer felt the Pauma Valley address was a suitable location for Cooley.

"This placement would have put children and families at risk, so we went to battle alongside our community, and we prevailed," DA Summer Stephan said. "I want to acknowledge that the system worked in that the State Department of Hospitals gave serious consideration to our concerns and spared us from an extended legal battle in court. They showed that they care about our community. I also want to acknowledge the SAFE Task Force, led by the Sheriff's Department, for all their work giving notification and gathering input from the community. As always, the DA Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division demonstrated their commitment to keeping our children safe and the community stood firmly with us in stopping this placement."

In light of Liberty Healthcare and The Department of State Hospital's clarification a judge vacated the October 9 public hearing.

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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.*