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The Legislature is now deciding who is more important to them – criminals or victims. The Governor has proposed, and the majority of Senate Democrats supported, sweeping legislation that is the most dangerous public safety bill in our state’s history. It is not too much to say that innocent lives are at stake.

The “parade” of horrible parts to the bill is extensive. It includes an “early release” of approximately 27,000 criminals currently in state prison. Having the second highest state prison commitment rate for felons in California means our county will bear a painful burden of such a release. Our already overcrowded jail and court systems would suffer a meltdown.

Another dangerous aspect is the misguided and extensive increase of good time credits. The bill not only hands them out like candy to almost every inmate it even gives them extra credit when they sit in our jails. I only wish the Legislature was so generous with victims.

The additional proposal to release 46,000 criminals from parole supervision makes any rehabilitation impossible by removing assistance that a parole agent would provide.

Moreover, I strongly agree in the deportation of illegal immigrant felons but only after they serve a full sentence. This bill proposes to release them before they receive justice. With a troubled national border an illegal immigrant felon can easily cross back into the United States and use his “get out of jail free” card. In 2008 alone, 1600 previously deported illegal immigrant felons were caught in California

There is also a clever ploy to reduce numerous felonies to misdemeanors. This is a direct attack on the Three Strikes Law by stopping prosecutorial agencies from charging a dangerous criminal with a “third strike” because it has been changed to a misdemeanor. This is another blatant attempt to weaken the Three Strikes Law.

Another “pet project” of prisoners’ rights groups is also in the bill. A sentencing commission has been proposed for many years and has nothing to do with saving money. The commission members will be given unprecedented power to weaken public safety laws and because they are appointed, not elected, no one can be held accountable by the voters. This is exactly the idea. One of the commission members must be a public defender and another, an “ex-felon.” We all know where this commission is headed.

A system of justice should have several fundamental facets. First, justice should be preeminent. Exalting money over justice is not an honorable pursuit and only creates new victims.

Secondly, criminals must be held accountable. Failing to do so sends the wrong message to those who prey upon us. Releasing criminals early due to “budget constraints” tells them our

system will not hold them completely accountable. Weakness encourages predators and again creates more victims.

This bill is nothing more than an attempt by liberals to take advantage of our fiscal crisis by gutting tough public safety laws to benefit dangerous criminals. If allowed to quickly return to their “target rich environments” emboldened by the failure of elected officials, more crimes will quickly be committed. We need only to look to Los Angeles where only weeks ago a 17 year-old girl named Lily Burk was robbed and brutally murdered by a repeat felon who was given early unsupervised release to attend drug rehab. Have we learned nothing from this example?