



Riverside County District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

ROD PACHECO
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Ryan Hightower
Public Information Officer
Contact: 951. 955. 8526

For Immediate Release

March 23, 2010

BILL SPONSORED BY DA ROD PACHECO TO STRENGTHEN PENALTIES FOR CONVICTED RAPISTS PASSES ASSEMBLY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

SACRAMENTO – Assembly Bill 2054, aimed at tougher penalties for those convicted of rape, was passed by the Assembly Public Safety Committee this morning.

Current law does not consider rape through the use of an intoxicating substance, such as “date rape” drugs or rape of an unconscious person, as violent offenses. This means that offenders are eligible for greater reductions in their sentences based on various factors, including behavior while incarcerated. Up to 50 percent of their sentence can be reduced through these credits.

AB 2054, sponsored by the Riverside County District Attorney's Office and authored by Assemblymember Jeff Miller of Corona, would reduce those credits to 15 percent by terming all forms of rape as “violent” offenses. That 15 percent reduction brings these offenses in line with all other types of rape, which are currently deemed violent by California law. Thus, offenders are not given extra time off their sentence for employing creative and subversive means in committing their crimes.

“Just because someone tricks their victim doesn’t mean they deserve extra-credit,” District Attorney Rod Pacheco said. “All offenders must be punished accordingly for their crimes and this legal loophole must be closed to ensure that sexual predators aren’t allowed to prey on innocent victims.”

"Today marks an important first step, but there is much work left to do. While this process is never easy, I am confident that this issue is just too important not to see through to the end," Assemblymember Jeff Miller said of the bill's passage. "We will win the fight to put this law on the books – and it will happen in a decisive way with bipartisan support."

The bill was passed through the Public Safety Committee with four “yes” votes and three abstentions. It received bipartisan support from the committee’s two Republican members and two of its Democrat members.

Supervising Deputy District Attorney Gerald Fineman suggested the new legislation and Deputy District Attorney Rob Hightower testified on its behalf today. The legislation will be heard later this year by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

###