



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE
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**DA MIKE HESTRIN'S STATEMENT ON
GOV. NEWSOM'S DEATH PENALTY 'MORATORIUM'**

RIVERSIDE – District Attorney Mike Hestrin has issued the following statement regarding Gov. Gavin Newsom's "moratorium" on the death penalty in California:

On Wednesday, Gov. Gavin Newsom imposed a "moratorium" on the death penalty in California and issued a blanket death penalty "reprieve" for eligible inmates based on his own personal beliefs about the death penalty. If this decision had been made by the people through their representatives or the initiative process, I would have no problem with it. However, this "reprieve" has subverted the express will of the people, disregarded the Supreme Court's binding decisions, ignored constitutional constraints on his power and inflicted lasting damage to the rule of law.

What is more, Gov. Newsom's abuse of power has opened fresh wounds for murder victims' families, and only serves to further delay, if not outright deny, just and deserving punishments for society's very worst of the worst.

At the time of the governor's announcement, over two dozen death row inmates had exhausted their decades-long state and federal appeals, their convictions having been scrutinized and invariably upheld by our judiciary. And, because of interventions filed by several district attorneys and other entities on behalf of the people and crime victims' families, executions were set to resume in California — finally giving meaning to what the state's voters had enacted through Proposition 66 and the rule of law as set forth in the Constitution, the death penalty statutes and judicial rulings.

Where is the reprieve for 15-year-old Susan Jordan, who was attacked, raped, and strangled while walking to school, by previously convicted rapist Albert Brown? Brown, who after raping and murdering Susan, called her family to taunt and torment them, telling her mother she would never see her daughter again and where to find her body.

Or what about Don and Kathy Davis and their two children, 7-year-old Michelle and 2-year-old Melissa, three of whom were murdered by Ronald Deere in 1982 because Kathy's sister broke up with Deere? In a savage act of revenge, Deere broke into the home of the Davis family and waited for them. When Don and his little girls arrived, Deere slaughtered them all with a rifle. Kathy and her sister found their bodies later that evening. Deere ultimately confessed, stating he hoped he would "get the gas chamber."

These are two of the dozens of depraved murderers whose convictions had been upheld by the courts and were poised for execution before Wednesday's announcement.

These families have been denied justice for far too long, and justice delayed is justice denied.

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