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July 19, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I write to express my strong opposition to California's Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) Conditional Release Program (CONREP). It is a dangerous mistake.

As you must be aware, less than one percent of the sex offender population is comprised of SVPs. As defined by California statute, "...sexually violent predator" means a person who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense against one or more victims and who has diagnosed mental disorder that makes the person a danger to the health and safety of others in that it is likely that he or she will engage in sexually violent criminal behavior." According to data from the Megan's Law database, California is home to at least 111 SVPsⁱ.

This is why I introduced the *Stopping Sexually Violent Predators Act*, which ends taxpayer funding for SVPs outside of correctional or secure medical facilities and requires states to report all convicted SVPs to the U.S. Department of Justice for review of potential federal charges.

Because SVPs have a diagnosed medical disorder, they are neither in treatment nor recovery. This is why SVPs as a matter of course remain in state custody after serving prison sentences and then entering secure treatment facilities. Under California's SVP program, they can petition the court to leave supervised care and be placed in local communities.

According to a recent study by the American Psychological Associationⁱⁱ, nearly half of observed SVPs were returned to custody after violating release terms, and several committed additional sexually violent offenses upon release from in-patient facilities. Even *one* offense is too many, and by continuing a clearly failed program, California is endangering its communities.

In only the last three years, I have joined our East County community in San Diego to oppose the placement of multiple SVPs in our neighborhoods and near schools, children, and families. Just last week, the State of California attempted to place SVP Merle Wakefield, a 67-year-old man convicted multiple times for offenses including lewd and lascivious acts on minors younger than 14 years old into a private residence in Poway. Because of strong efforts from my office, Poway local leaders', and the dedicated members of our community, his relocation to the City of Poway has been halted.

Governor, the SVP CONREP is broken. The continued placement of SVPs in our communities is a dangerous mistake, and I urge you to end this program.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Member of Congress

ⁱ <https://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>

ⁱⁱ <https://psvcnet.apa.org/record/2022-81194-001>