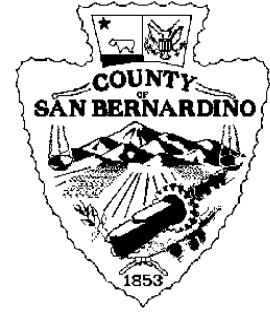


NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul Biane

www.sbcounty.gov/Biane



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislation Sought by Supervisor Biane Signed into Law

SACRAMENTO – Under a new law signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on July 6, mental health providers will be allowed to legally notify local law enforcement when mentally disordered offenders enrolled in a little-known state program move into a community.

San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Paul Biane urged Senator Bob Dutton to introduce SB 1265 after a January 2010 murder in the City of Upland involving a man released from a mental hospital under the State Department of Mental Health's Forensic Conditional Release Program (ConRep). Seven ConRep patients were living in a boarding home next to an elementary school. One patient reportedly killed a fellow patient before fleeing the home. The slaying suspect was later found dead in a vehicle near the Salton Sea.

ConRep patients have been found by the courts to be not guilty by reason of insanity or incompetent to stand trial. Some patients have also been committed as mentally disordered offenders. The San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, which oversees the ConRep programs in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, was prohibited by law from notifying the Upland Police Department about the patients living in the city.

"It is unthinkable that current law prohibits law enforcement from being notified when potentially dangerous individuals are placed in residential neighborhoods," Senator Dutton said.

"This law will make our local communities and communities throughout the state safer," Biane said. "Informing police about the whereabouts of ConRep patients will protect public safety and the safety of officers who have to respond to calls at patients' homes."

Biane also thanked Senator Dutton for his quick response to his request for legislation following the incident in Upland involving ConRep patients.

"Senator Dutton and I have enjoyed a great working relationship throughout the years, and I'm very appreciative of his efforts to ensure passage of this important piece of public safety legislation," Biane said.

Before passage of the SB 1265, lawmakers removed a provision limiting the number of offenders who can live in a home and a provision restricting how close patients can live to schools. Both provisions were requested by Supervisor Biane. Even though the provisions were not carried in the final law signed by the governor, local ConRep providers can adopt more stringent living restrictions for patients.

Following the slaying in Upland, Supervisor Biane directed the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health to develop a more restrictive living policy for ConRep patients. Today, the department does not allow more than three ConRep patients to live in a home, and each client must have his/her own bedroom. Clients are also precluded from living within 2,000 feet of any school.

The San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health provides ConRep patients with counseling and oversight, including random drug screenings and home visits.

SB 1265 will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2011.

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