

YES_{on}✓ 34

YES on 34 -- SAFE California Campaign

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For Immediate Release

Former Prison Wardens, Corrections Officials Urge “YES on 34” Vote

Individuals with direct involvement in executions express strong support for Prop 34 to replace the death penalty in California with life in prison without parole

SAN FRANCISCO – Eight former wardens and corrections officials with direct involvement in executions in California, Georgia, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia and Florida have come together to ask voters in California to consider a “YES on 34” vote in November to replace the death penalty with life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Ron McAndrew, a former prison warden from Florida, and former corrections officer Jerry Givens will tour the Central Valley from October 22 to 26, with stops from Riverside to Fresno. McAndrew conducted the last three electrocutions in Florida before establishing that state’s protocol and mechanisms in preparation for its switch to lethal injections. Jerry Givens led Virginia’s execution team 62 times.

In an [open letter released today](#), the “YES on 34” team of former wardens and corrections officers from California and other states expressed concern about maintaining a costly system that is also ineffective and does nothing to combat crime. The officials also described the deep concern about innocent individuals on death row held by many of the public employees who have been entrusted with overseeing and managing death penalty executions.

Damon Thibodeux, who spent 15 years on death row in Louisiana and was exonerated in September, is the latest innocent person to have been exonerated from death row. A total 141 innocent persons have been sentenced to death in the U.S. and some have been executed. The law enforcement group also cited the case of Francisco “Franky” Carrillo, noting that if Mr. Carrillo, a Los Angeles man who was wrongfully convicted at 16 and imprisoned for 20 years, had been just two years older at the time of his wrongful conviction, he could have been sentenced to death.

“It is those cases that are most haunting to an executioner... No one has the right to ask a public servant to take on a lifelong sentence of nagging doubt, and for some of us, shame and guilt. Should our justice system be causing so much harm to so many when there is an alternative?”

The “YESon 34” supporters also confirmed that their experience as wardens and corrections officials had proved that a sentence of life in prison with absolutely no opportunity for parole holds criminals accountable and would remove the special treatment inmates currently get on death row. In California, most death row inmates die of old age or natural causes and enjoy the privileges like individual cells, prison visits 7 days a week (versus just weekends for other inmates), special legal teams that work only on death penalty cases and sometimes provide gifts like television sets, and extra exercise time on the yard.

In their letter, the law enforcement group highlighted the maxim that the best way to prevent crime is to solve it: *“Getting violent criminals off our streets will make our communities far safer than any execution ever will.”*

California’s Proposition 34, the Savings, Accountability and Full Enforcement for California Act (SAFE California Act), requires that convicted killers work and pay restitution to a victim’s compensation fund. Prop. 34 directs \$100 million in savings to law enforcement, to be used for DNA testing, crime labs, and other tools police can use to solve more crimes in a state where 46% of murders and 56% of reported rapes go unsolved each year.

The independent, nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office of California has estimated savings of \$130 million a year in state costs for death row that go over and above the costs for a sentence of life in prison without parole.

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