



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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**FIFTY PERCENT OF TULARE COUNTY COURT COVID RELEASES
RE-OFFEND**

Half of the inmates released from custody earlier this year have re-offended according to research conducted by staff of the Office of the District Attorney. In April and July of this year, TCDA prosecutors opposed hundreds of motions requesting inmates housed in Tulare County jail facilities be released due to possible COVID dangers. As a result of those motions, over 100 inmates were ordered by the Tulare County Superior Court to be released back into our communities.

“I recognize that there is a technical distinction between incarcerated defendants who were released as a result of COVID orders and those potential inmates released immediately due to zero-dollar bail, but there is no distinction in the impact on our community. History shows us that repeat offenders will, and have, re-offended. While it is a sad fact that half of these inmates released are facing new charges, the real travesty is that about one-third of these repeat offenders are now facing felony charges involving crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, and domestic violence. These victims, these families, and these members of our community are why my Office stridently opposed these motions and their voice deserves to be heard,” said District Attorney Tim Ward.

“In an effort to protect public safety, I have repeatedly advocated for the elimination of zero-dollar bail. In June, the Judicial Council of California voted to stop the mandatory policy and leave its further practice to the discretion of the county Presiding Judge. Unfortunately, the Court notified us yesterday that other emergency provisions will continue, and that no order was given to rescind zero-dollar bail. I do support some modification to court operations which allow parties to appear in court via remote technology, but I have been very vocal about opposing these early release schemes,” continued Ward.

“In light of the voters of this County (and State) declaring that cash bail should remain, I am disappointed that our law enforcement partners and residents are left unprotected. One cannot remain committed to a theoretical social experiment without due regard for the people who shoulder the burden of crime,” Ward stated.

“Please know that the dedicated Prosecutors who carry the Torch for victims and their families will continue striving to seek justice every day and we will continue to oppose the unwarranted release of inmates.”