

NEWS

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Supervisors blast state for moving toward inmate release

Members of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors harshly criticized the state Senate today for approving a plan to release 27,300 inmates from state prisons onto the streets of California and weaken sentencing laws.

"The primary responsibility of a public official is to protect citizens," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary C. Ovitt. "I am outraged by the state Senate's action today to clearly violate that trust."

"This is a dangerous and alarming result of a state that can't put its budget house in order. To consider jeopardizing the safety and well-being of our communities is inexcusable," Chairman Ovitt said.

The Senate this afternoon voted 21-19 to approve a plan to reduce the prison population by 27,300 inmates and form a commission that could change sentencing laws in the future. The intention is to reduce prison overcrowding and reduce state spending, but the result will be countless felons roaming California neighborhoods who would otherwise be behind bars.

The Assembly is expected to vote later this afternoon, and Gov. Schwarzenegger has said he supports the plan.

First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt condemned the action as potentially dangerous.

"The most important responsibility of our government is to ensure public safety," said Supervisor Mitzelfelt. "Releasing criminals into our neighborhoods should not even be considered."