

PEACE OFFICERS

o f C a l i f o r n i a

NO on 5 — Catch-and-Release

Peace Officers of California (P.O.C.), an all volunteer association representing the interests of a wide variety of sworn state peace officers, opposes Proposition 5. This ballot initiative would, among other things, hold harmless the perpetrators of violent crimes, weapons offenses, and other potential felonies if the individual is under the influence of drugs.

“Regardless of the intent, this ballot initiative is too poorly constructed to guarantee anything but disastrous outcomes for California families,” said Bob Orange, President of P.O.C. “This amounts to a get out of jail free card for anyone who uses illegal drugs, which is why we have joined Governor Schwarzenegger, MADD, the California Police Chiefs and Sheriffs, District Attorneys, and the LA Times in opposing Proposition 5.

“We all have family, friends, and associates who have made bad decisions, many with tragic consequences. We respect the proponents of this initiative, but individuals weigh their decisions to break the law knowingly. You should not be able to assault your spouse or others, kill or injure, break and enter or commit other crimes and then be able to avoid jail time by using the ‘drugs made me do it defense.’ People who don’t fear repercussions of their actions tend to not change and other criminals will simply adopt this as a defense.”

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Likewise, the unknown fiscal impacts of the proposition from the release of 45,000 prisoners could break local government budgets with increased enforcement costs. History indicates offenders who complete drug treatment programs are actually more likely to break the law again.

“We believe this would create a costly system of ‘catch-and-release’ drug addicts who are immune to jail sentences,” said Jerry Karnow, legislative liaison for P.O.C. “We are very concerned about the unknown fiscal impact this would have on the state with rising unemployment, failing housing markets, and other economic difficulties. In the midst of such economic turmoil, with the potential numbers of prisoners kicked loose, it simply attempts to do too much with little clarity of its effects. We don’t believe the long-term prison costs savings will be there in the end, and will have a net effect of decriminalizing many serious crimes.”

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