



California Police Chiefs Association

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2008 Legislative Objectives

The California Police Chiefs Association has several very high priorities during this year's legislative session. The highest of those will be the 2008-2009 budget proposal. That proposal, which was presented to the Legislature on January 10, advocates an across the board cut in law enforcement funding. All programs, including the COPS and the Booking Fee Solution budget provisions will be slashed by 10%. For police chiefs, those cuts will have tangible consequences. It means that there will be fewer officers, with less resources, to protect our communities. Since California's police chiefs protect over three quarters of Californians, the public safety dimensions of those cuts are extremely serious. Our organization will be devoting every available resource to seek full restoration of public safety funding.

We are also extremely concerned about the consideration that is being given to releasing some 22,000 so-called "non-serious" offenders from state prison. In the first place, we don't believe that there is such a person as a "non-serious" offender in state prison; secondly, the very phrase "non-serious offender" is a comfortingly misleading one. The list of so-called "non-serious offenders" who have committed heinous crimes is extensive (remember, Charles Manson was a "non-serious" offender before he went on his killing spree). What the early release of so many felons will inevitably mean is that violent and serious crime will increase in our communities. The California Police Chiefs Association is extremely engaged in opposing this tragically unwise proposal.

So-called "Medicinal Marijuana Dispensaries" were not authorized by Proposition 215, but they exist all over the state. These dispensaries have proven to be magnets for violent crime – something that should come as no surprise when you realize that a dispensary has both cash and dope. The California Police Chiefs Association has convened a working group to address the medical marijuana dispensary issues. We have been joined in that effort by our allies the California State Sheriffs Association, the California District Attorneys Association, the California Peace Officers Association and the California Narcotic Officers Association.

Finally, we are strong supporters of the Safe Neighborhoods Act, which will increase penalties for gang crimes, provide effective and monitored rehabilitation programs, and provide law enforcement with needed resources to carry out our mission.