

CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISORS ORGANIZATION

August 21, 2009 - Weekly Update

Governor Toured Chino (CIM) After Major Riot: On August 8th the Governor toured CIM in Chino where a major riot occurred a couple of weeks ago. The Governor said that the prison system is, “collapsing under its own weight,” and called on legislators to make changes that could reduce overcrowding in prisons.

According to the CCSO Chapter President at CIM Lt. Sean Moore the overcrowding is not so much the problem as is understaffing. CIM is a reception center that on a given day has 1300-1400 unclassified inmates on a yard with 32 staff, which includes outside patrols. In a dorm 18 staff (4 are Rovers) oversee approximately 200 unclassified inmates. Lt. Moore said the safety of officers were at risk the day of the riot because the yard that went off had no escape routes for staff.

Lt. Moore said this is about money. He said the sergeants took control and maintained the skirmish line the day of the riot. He said, “They did everything they were suppose to do.”

Senate Votes YES on Prison Reforms: The Senate on August 20th voted 21-19 to narrowly approve a plan to reduce the prison population by 27,300 inmates and form a commission that could change sentencing laws in the future to reduce prison overcrowding.

Senate action came after hours of debate, in which Republicans predicted increased crime as a result of the releases, while Democrats defended the cost-cutting move as a necessary action that contains adequate public safety protections. The Governor's plan would cut the state's prison population of 167,700 inmates by roughly 27,300 less over the next fiscal year. The proposal mainly relies on various maneuvers and reclassifications to get those numbers down.

California police chiefs and district attorney associations are strongly opposing the commission proposal, saying it would give an unelected body authority to transform sentencing laws.

CCSO, as a labor organization, vehemently opposes releasing 27,300 inmates over the next fiscal year, and the 37,000 inmates in the next two years. Putting inmates out on the streets 12 months early, under house arrest, and reclassifying property crimes from a felony to a misdemeanor is not the answer. The answer is to build more prisons, build more reentry facilities, direct monies into securing California communities, and hire more staff to address problems within prisons.

The overcrowding in prisons is dangerous to staff as well as inmates, but loosening sentencing laws and releasing inmates to their homes a year early is dangerous to the citizens of California. Furthermore, releasing inmates and downsizing CDCR only puts more state workers in the unemployment lines. This is a travesty and will surely backfire when crime increases in all our communities.

In summary, the Senate has voted yes to release 27,300 inmates and create a sentencing law commission. This proposal is now with the Assembly. As of this update, the Assembly has not passed the proposal. Let us only hope that the Assembly says NO to releasing inmates and creating another commission.

T a k e C a r e a n d B e S a f e