



רודף שלום

September 28, 2007

Governor Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 511, 609 and 756

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I write on behalf of Congregation Rodef Sholom to express our support for SB 511 (requiring electronic recording of interrogations), SB 609 (requiring corroboration of evidence proffered by jailhouse informants), and SB 756 (requiring better guidelines for eyewitness identification procedures). We urge you to sign these bills into law.

Congregation Rodef Sholom is located in San Rafael, California, and is affiliated with the Union of Reform Judaism. Our congregation consists of almost 1200 families and nearly 4000 congregants in Marin County.

As you know, over the last few years, hundreds of convicted individuals throughout the country have been fully exonerated of the serious crimes for which they were convicted, usually through DNA evidence that did not surface until they had spent years, sometimes decades of incarceration. Unfortunately, such DNA and other forms of virtually foolproof evidence are not available in most cases. We know that there must be hundreds or thousands of accused or already convicted Californians who are factually innocent, but will be or were unable to overcome less reliable evidence that suggests their guilt.

For us, this is a dilemma demanding our attention. Whenever innocent people are wrongly convicted, not only are the true perpetrators of "their" crimes left free to commit more crimes against more victims, but we, as a society, have failed to satisfy our moral responsibility. We must insist that our system of justice does all that is reasonably possible to assure that criminal convictions cannot be based on unreliable or questionable evidence if more reliable proof was or could have been made available to prove the guilt or innocence of an accused individual. We are not "soft" on crime, but we are "hard" on justice.

We support the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice's unanimous recommendations for reforms that can prevent wrongful convictions in our state, and add the name of Congregation Rodef Sholom to the growing list of individuals, religious organizations and other groups supporting these three bills passed by the Legislature. We urge your signature of all three bills into law.

Sincerely,

Leonard Rifkind,
President, Board of Directors

cc [fax: (408) 554-5026]:

California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice

Rabbi Stacy Friedman
Rabbi Michael Lozak
Rabbi Noa Kushner
Cantor David Margules
Rabbi Emeritus Michael Barenbaum
Executive Director Michael Kamler

170 North San Pedro Road
San Rafael, CA 94903
415.479.3441
415.479.9220 fax
office@rodefsholom.org
www.rodefsholom.org