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September 11, 2007

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of the State of California
Attn: Chris Ryan, Deputy Legislative Secretary
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Support for SB 511, SB 609, and SB 756 (wrongful convictions)

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing to express Prison Fellowship's strong support for SB 511, 609 and 756. These are modest bills which have been carefully crafted to lessen the chances of wrongful convictions. No one is served by having an innocent person imprisoned while the real criminal remains free. Yet, because of flaws in our system, that has happened all too frequently.

Such wrongful convictions give a false sense of protection to victims, and add to their anguish when it is discovered that the person who actually harmed them remains on the loose.

We realize that many prosecutors want unfettered discretion in questioning suspects and collecting testimony. While most prosecutors are highly ethical defenders of justice, some have overzealously sought convictions at the expense of the truth, and their must be restraints on their power. The U.S. Supreme Court succinctly stated the ethical responsibilities of a prosecutor, "While he may strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones. It is as much his duty to refrain from improper methods calculated to produce a wrongful conviction as it is to use every legitimate means to bring about a just one."

This package of bills is the result of the in-depth study of these miscarriages of justice by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, which included eminent law enforcement, prosecutors, victims and defense counsel.

In the interest of truth and fairness, we ask you to sign this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background, reading "Pat Nolan".

Pat Nolan
Vice President, Prison Fellowship