

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION OF CALIFORNIA

September 12, 2007

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 756 (Ridley-Thomas) – SUPPORT

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

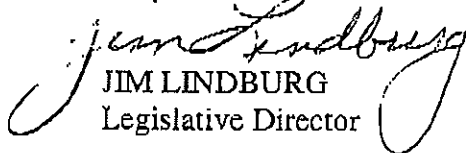
The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL) urges your signature on SB 756 which requires the Department of Justice, in consultation with local law enforcement agencies, to develop guidelines to reduce the number of eyewitness misidentifications in criminal proceedings and to consider adopting policies and procedures to reduce their frequency.

A report by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice demonstrates that eyewitness misidentifications are prevalent in many cases resulting in wrongful convictions. Possible remedies include double-blind testing to reduce the possibility of verbal and nonverbal cues given to witnesses, whether intentional or inadvertent, and the use of sequential lineups as opposed to simultaneous lineups.

Double-blind testing is the norm when conducting scientific experiments. Defendants facing a possible death sentence deserve no less. In addition, research demonstrates that conducting simultaneous lineups results in witnesses identifying the person who most closely *resembles* the suspect, which is not the same as identifying the suspect.

Though it is impossible to prevent convictions entirely, local law enforcement agencies could take steps to reduce their frequency. Adding more precision will help ensure that the guilty do not remain at large while the innocent are convicted. Thus, it is in the interest of public safety that SB 756 becomes law.

Sincerely yours,


JIM LINDBURG
Legislative Director

Cc: Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas (4061)

THE FCL IS A LEGISLATIVE ACTION GROUP FOUNDED BY QUAKERS IN 1952.