

**Law Offices Of The Public Defender**

Administration

Doreen Boxer  
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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

September 7, 2007

The Honorable Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 511 and SB 609

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the County of San Bernardino Public Defender's Office, I am writing to express our support for SB 511 (requiring electronic recording of interrogations) and SB 609 (requiring corroboration for jailhouse informants).

DNA evidence has proven that innocent people are being convicted and sentenced to prison in far greater numbers than we ever imagined. Each time an innocent person is wrongfully convicted, the harm falls not only on that person but also on the community and the crime victims, as each wrongful conviction leaves the true perpetrator on the streets to hurt more people. Convicting the guilty while protecting the innocent is the most fundamental goal of our criminal justice system. Yet, all too often, we fall short.

The California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice was established by California State Senate Resolution No. 44 "to study and review the administration of criminal justice in California, determine the extent to which that process has failed in the past," and recommend proposals to ensure that the administration of criminal justice in California is just, fair, and accurate. Chaired by the Honorable John Van de Kamp, the former Attorney General and former Los Angeles County District Attorney, this bipartisan commission is composed of a victims' rights advocate, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and defense attorneys.

The Commission has conducted hearings, reviewed scientific evidence, consulted experts, and listened to personal testimonials. Based on this evidence, the Commission has issued a series of unanimous recommendations for reforms needed to prevent wrongful convictions in this state. These two bills will implement the most basic and most urgently needed reforms. Specifically,

- SB 511 will require electronic recording of custodial interrogations in violent felony cases. Research has shown that recording of interrogations is the best method to detect and prevent false confessions.
- SB 609 will require corroboration of testimony by jailhouse informants. We know that informants often lie to get out of jail. Thus, we should require some evidence to show they are telling the truth.

The San Bernardino County Public Defender's Office strongly supports the legislative reforms recommended by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice and urges you to sign SB 511 and SB 609 into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doreen Boxer", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Doreen Boxer  
Public Defender

DB/roz

cc: California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice via fax: (408) 554-5026

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