



Families to testify

DA also to appear at death penalty hearing

By Rod Leveque, Staff Writer

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 San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael A. Ramos and the relatives of three local murder victims plan to testify today during a public hearing on the administration of the death penalty in California.

Joining Ramos at the hearing in Los Angeles will be Chino Hills resident Mary Ann Hughes, whose 11-year-old son, Christopher, was murdered in 1983. Hughes has fought for the death penalty for convicted killer Kevin Cooper for more than two decades.

"I want to express our frustration with how messed up this whole legal system is," she said Tuesday. "Too often the victim's side is never heard."

Also planning to testify are relatives of two girls murdered by Philip Lucero in 1980 in Yucaipa, according to the District Attorney's Office.

Both Cooper and Lucero remain on death row.

The hearing is organized by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, which was created by the state Senate to examine legal issues.

Today's session at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in downtown Los Angeles focuses on the fair administration of the death penalty.

Ramos will speak during the morning portion of the hearing.

Hughes said she has been given three minutes to address the commissioners during the public-comments portion of the hearing in the afternoon.

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