

PRESS RELEASE
JUNE 22, 2007

FROM: CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON THE FAIR
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

CONTACT: Gerald F. Uelmen, Executive Director
Tel. 408-554-5002
Fax 408-554-5026
Email guelmen@scu.edu

TRIO OF BILLS SPONSORED BY THE CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON THE FAIR ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE PASS SENATE AND AWAIT HEARING IN THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY ON JUNE 26, 2007. BILLS WILL HELP CURB WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS BY REDUCING THE RISKS OF FALSE CONFESSIONS, FALSE INFORMANT TESTIMONY, AND MISTAKEN EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATIONS.

A trio of bills designed to curb the leading causes of wrongful convictions passed the California State Senate and now await hearing in the Assembly Committee on Public Safety on June 26, 2007.

The three bills are:

SB 756 (D-Ridley-Thomas): this bill will require the Attorney General, in consultation with key stakeholders in the criminal justice system, to develop new guidelines for conducting line-ups based on documented best practices.

SB 511 (D-Alquist): this bill will mandate electronic recording of custodial interrogations in homicides and violent felonies. If an officer fails to record interrogation and exceptional circumstances are not shown, a jury would be instructed to consider the evidence of a confession with caution.

SB 609 (D-Romero): this bill will require corroborating evidence for the testimony of jailhouse informants. Jailhouse informants have strong reasons to lie because they are offered lenience in return for information.

The hearing before the Assembly Public Safety Committee will take place in Room 126 of the State Capitol, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Witnesses testifying in favor of the legislation will include Commission Chair John Van de Kamp, Executive Director Gerald Uelmen, wrongfully convicted exoneree Arthur Carmona, and Paula Kurland, the mother of a murder victim.

For information on the Commission, please visit www.ccfaj.org

###