

DEBRA BOWEN

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Two Proposed Corrections Initiatives Enter Circulation

*Increase in Prisoner Rights. Statute.
and
Sentencing and Parole Reform. Statute.*

SACRAMENTO – Secretary of State Debra Bowen today announced that the proponent of two new initiatives may begin collecting petition signatures for her measures.

The Attorney General prepares the legal title and summary that is required to appear on initiative petitions. When the official language is complete, the Attorney General forwards it to the proponent and to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State then provides calendar deadlines to the proponent and to county elections officials, and the initiatives may be circulated for signatures. The Attorney General's official title and summary for the first measure is as follows:

INCREASE IN PRISONER RIGHTS. STATUTE. Amends California Penal Code to provide additional rights to adult prisoners. Requires that prisoners have a right to: 1) confidential meetings and correspondence with media; 2) minimum 56 hours per week visitation; 3) minimum time period for recreation and entertainment; 4) contact and family overnight visitation for inmates not housed in segregation, security, or intake; 5) specified minimum access to personal property, canteen goods, and entertainment appliances; 6) specified minimum telephone access; and 7) access to movies rated "PG-13," "R," and "NC-17." Eliminates prison authorities' discretion to prohibit access to material deemed obscene. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: Increased prison operating costs of several tens of millions of dollars annually primarily to increase inmate access to visiting. One-time capital outlay costs of up to a couple tens of millions of dollars to construct and renovate prison visiting facilities. (Initiative 07-0040.)

The Secretary of State's tracking number for this measure is 1272 and the Attorney General's tracking number is 07-0040.

The Attorney General's official title and summary for the second measure is as follows:

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SENTENCING AND PAROLE REFORM. STATUTE. Repeals California's "three-strikes" sentencing statutes. Reduces sentences and provides earlier parole eligibility for habitual offenders. Provides for re-sentencing of offenders, except persons convicted of murder, to conform with new sentencing limits. Provides persons sentenced to life with possibility of parole, including those previously sentenced, become parole eligible after seven years. Requires persons sentenced to life with possibility of parole be released within specified time frames. Requires recalculations of parole eligibility dates, resetting of parole release dates, and limits factors that may be considered in setting parole release dates. Increases work-time credits. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: Net state operating savings of potentially a few hundred million dollars initially, increasing to the low billions of dollars annually, primarily due to reduced prison operating costs. Unknown one-time state savings for capital outlay associated with prison construction that would otherwise be needed, potentially as much as several billions of dollars in the long term. Increased county costs potentially in the low hundreds of millions of dollars annually for jail and court-related costs. (Initiative 07-0039.)

The Secretary of State's tracking number for this measure is 1273 and the Attorney General's tracking number is 07-0039.

The proponent for the measures, Ann Smith, must collect the signatures of 433,971 registered voters – the number equal to 5% of the total votes cast for governor in the 2006 gubernatorial election – for each measure in order to qualify it for the ballot. The proponent has 150 days to circulate petitions for these measures, meaning the signatures must be collected by February 25, 2008.

The initiative proponent can be reached at (951) 210-9149.

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