



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District Attorney Lisa A. Smittcamp's Statement Regarding the Murder of the Selma Police Officer

It is a tragic day in the County of Fresno and the state of California, as we have suffered the loss of another fine peace officer who was shot and killed in the line of duty by a callous and violent criminal.

While we mourn this tragic loss and offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the fallen officer, and the Selma Police Department, we must also focus our energy on demanding that our legislators do more to hold criminals accountable for their actions.

This officer was the son of farmworkers. He went to the police academy and took the initiative to educate himself. He was part of the Explorer Program at the Reedley Police Department before he became a sworn peace officer with the Selma Police Department. He was a son, a brother, a friend, and an expectant father. While honorably serving his community today in Selma, California, he was shot and killed in cold blood by a 23-year-old felon with no regard for human life. The shooter is an admitted gang member and has been arrested for several felony offenses that were prosecuted by the Fresno County District Attorney's Office for charges related to robbery, weapons, and drugs.

In March of 2022, he was sentenced by a judge to serve 5 years and 4 months in prison. However, because of laws passed in the last few years that give additional credits for time served in local jail, and other new laws which allow for arbitrary "accelerated time credits" upon entry to the prison system, his release date was set for August 23, 2022, a mere 5 months after his original sentence. He was eventually released in late September 2022 and placed on Post Release Community Supervision when he should have been serving more time in prison.

Today, Governor Gavin Newsom, and every legislator in the state of California who supports this over-reaching phenomenon they try to disguise as legitimate criminal justice reform, has the blood of this officer on their hands.

The Governor and certain members of the California legislature have created a warped system that allows active and violent criminals to receive arbitrary "time credits" in an effort to reduce the state prison population to reach their goals of closing more prison facilities. Dangerous criminals are being released from our prison system by these accelerated and exaggerated time credits and numerous opportunities for early releases. When they get out, they are empowered to continue and intensify their violent behaviors, as they have not had enough consequences or treatment. They are released without significant punishment, rehabilitation programming, or educational opportunities. This madness is creating more victims and, furthermore, it is not serving the people who are committing the crimes.

Tonight, in the County of Fresno, we have two families that are suffering loss. The family of the slain officer, and the family of the shooter who will now be facing murder charges. If the prison system did an effective job of “corrections and rehabilitation” this would not be the case.

The Governor and his political allies who continue the quest to close state prisons are increasing the incidents of violence to everyone who lives in, or visits, the state of California. No city or county is safe from the wrath of this misguided thinking, and this mismanaged prison system.

How many more innocent officers and victims do we have to have before these politicians wake up and realize the destruction they have created? It is time to shine light on the truth of what is going on in the California prison system and make some real changes. It is time to return to a place of responsibility and accountability.