

# California's Justice Realignment and Prop 47 And the Rising Crime Rate

*Double digit increases in crime may be an early warning sign of what's to come as a result of California's sweeping justice realignment system.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Double digit increases in crime may be an early warning sign of what's to come as a result of California's sweeping justice realignment system and the passage of Proposition 47. [Riverside County District Attorney](#) Michael A. Hestrin discussed what's behind the recent uptick in crime as part of the continuing Randall Lewis Seminar Series presented by the [UC Riverside School of Public Policy's](#) Center for Sustainable Suburban Development.

Violent crime jumped more than 10-percent in Riverside County between January and June this year compared to 2014. The County's top prosecutor suspects that double digit increase may be an early warning sign of what's to come as a result of California's sweeping justice realignment system and the passage of Proposition 47.

Riverside County District Attorney Michael A. Hestrin talked about he believes is behind the uptick in crime as part of the continuing Randall Lewis Seminar



Michael A. Hestrin , Riverside County District Attorney

Series presented by the UC Riverside School of Public Policy's Center for Sustainable Suburban Development.

Hestrin explained to [Ron Loveridge](#), director of the CSSD and former Riverside Mayor, that Riverside County communities saw significant increases in almost every category of crime in the first half of this year.

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*Michael A. Hestrin, Riverside County District Attorney*

Normally when crime goes up during times of recession or economic downturn, it's focused in “hot spots.” “What you're seeing here is different,” Hestrin said.

Riverside County's 10.63 percent jump in violent crime, however, pales in comparison to the 26.92-percent increase in violent crime in Cathedral City. Robberies jumped 150-percent there as well. Even the city of Riverside, the most populous municipality in the Inland Empire, was stunned to see robberies climb almost 14.48-percent.

There's more than a suspicion, Hestrin said, that the increases are due to the justice system realignment

mandated by Assembly Bill 109 in 2011 and voter approve Prop 47 last year. AB 109 amended more than 500 criminal statutes to help reduce prison overcrowding mandated by Federal Courts. But it also forced California counties to incarcerate state prison inmates in already overcrowded and less secure local jails. To make room, local jails regularly release what Hestrin has called "the best of the worst" inmates only days or weeks into their years-long jail sentence. On top of that, the passage of Prop 47 reduced many felony drug sentences to misdemeanors. Theft crimes less than \$950 in value also became misdemeanors. The cumulative results of both crime initiatives have finally started to emerge. "Right now we have no misdemeanor folks in our jails," Hestrin said. "Getting a misdemeanor in Riverside County is a lot like getting a traffic ticket. You don't go to jail anymore." Hestrin also lamented that without a progressive sentencing system, many misdemeanor offenders and drug addicts see no reason to stop. "There's got to be a legislative fix so they eventually qualify for a felony," he said. In the meantime, Hestrin said police and prosecutors must do tough enforcement, as well as, crime intervention and prevention. He detailed an array of DA office programs to accomplish those goals and build bridges with those most at risk of becoming criminals. The DA said we know it's a small number of people committing a majority of the crimes. "They're very aware of Prop 47 and we need to close some of those loopholes."

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