California Drug Courts

The REAL Solution to Substance Abuse

Proposition 36 would cripple California’s highly successful Drug Courts.

Serious Treatment Without Compromising Public Safety

“... drug use and criminal behavior are substantially reduced while offenders are participating in drug court.”

Columbia University’s National Center
on Addiction and Substance Abuse
1998 Study

“If we prohibit the jailing of addicts on probation who relapse, we will wind up with more addicts on our streets, more families torn apart by drugs and alcohol, and more addicts committing serious crimes because they were never coerced into treatment.”

San Diego Union Tribune editorial
June 14, 2000

California Drug Courts are a proven success in combating and treating drug abuse. They handle cases involving drug-using offenders through comprehensive supervision, drug testing, treatment services and immediate sanctions and incentives.

Drug Courts utilize a team approach: judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, substance abuse treatment specialists, probation officers, law enforcement and correctional personnel, education and vocational experts and community leaders working together to help offenders deal successfully with their substance abuse problems.

California’s Drug Court system places drug-using offenders in appropriate drug treatment programs that tailor the level of intervention and resources commitment to the needs of the offenders without compromising public safety. Offenders are closely supervised, ordered to undergo treatment, submit to frequent drug testing, make regular appearances before a judge and are monitored closely for treatment compliance.

All offenders are drug tested, and those determined to have a drug use problem are supervised, drug tested and monitored by the Drug Court team led by the Drug Court judge.

National studies show that Drug Courts keep defendants in treatment and substantially lower drug use and re-arrest.

Proposition 36 would cripple California’s effective Drug Courts by:

- Tying the hands of judges by prohibiting them from imposing immediate sanctions, including short periods of jail time to change behavior and keep drug addicts in treatment.
- Prohibiting funding for urine testing or any other testing methods used to determine whether someone is using drugs — eliminating accountability and undercutting effective drug treatment.

- Prohibiting payment for any treatment over 12 months, even though extended treatment is the most effective approach for many long-term addicts.

- Prohibiting funding for any in-custody treatment programs.

- Removing the leverage of the criminal justice system to keep the offender in treatment and monitor continued drug use.

Proposition 36 is not a drug treatment bill — it is a decriminalization measure that would remove penalties for the use of heroin, crack, methamphetamine, PCP and other highly addictive drugs. This initiative destroys promising strides that California’s 101 Drug Courts have made in recent years in treating drug addiction as a public health issue and eviscerates the power of the court. It will not solve California’s drug abuse problem.

That’s why this dangerous and misleading initiative is opposed by judges, prosecutors, drug abuse treatment specialists and law enforcement.

Drug Courts are a proven model for success in overcoming substance abuse, and highly effective in working with offenders. The Legislature, Governor, drug treatment professionals and public safety officials should work together to implement a statewide system of Drug Courts, action that would provide effective drug treatment for substance abusers while protecting public safety.

- Drug courts save taxpayers $10 for every dollar invested — thanks to reduced jail and prison time, less criminal activity and lower criminal justice costs, according to the National Drug Court Institute.

To learn more, call Californians United Against Drug Abuse at 1-800-995-3221.