



NEWS RELEASE

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Supervisor Rowe and Board of Supervisors Vote to Oppose Rhoden Placement



SAN BERNARDINO-Supervisor Dawn Rowe and her colleagues on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution Tuesday denouncing the proposed placement of Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) Lawtis Donald Rhoden in the City of Twentynine Palms. The city is located within Rowe’s supervisorial district.

“San Bernardino County is united in opposing the placement of Mr. Rhoden because he has no connection to this community,” said Rowe. “Families deserve to live without fear of becoming his next victim.”

Rhoden has been in the custody of the California Department of State Hospitals since 2004. He was classified by the state as a SVP due to convictions in Los Angeles and Orange counties for the forcible rape of two 14-year old girls and one 17-year old girl. In addition to his convictions in California, Rhoden was convicted of raping a 13-year old girl in Tennessee.

Despite the heinous nature of his crimes, an Orange County Superior Court judge ordered Rhoden’s release because of extraordinary circumstances. Moreover, the court proposed relocating him to a home in a residential area of Twentynine Palms. Local officials, including Rep. Jay Obernolte (CA-08), submitted letters of opposition to the court voicing their concerns about the plan.

“Placing Mr. Rhoden in San Bernardino County is a terrible proposal for families in our community. We will continue to fight this proposal because it’s wrong to use our county as a dumping ground for violent sex offenders,” added Rowe.

A hearing is scheduled for May 21 at which time the Orange County Superior Court is expected to render a final decision on Rhoden’s placement. The public can visit sbcountyda.org for updates on the case and information regarding how to submit letters of opposition.

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