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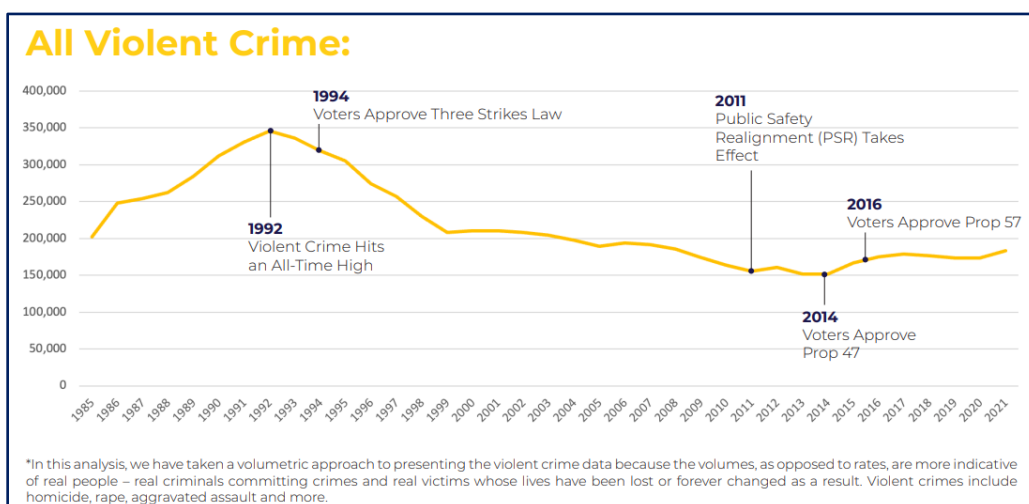
New Timeline of Decriminalization Trends in California Reveals Impact of Overreaching Criminal Justice Reforms on Public Safety

Timeline demonstrates a clear correlation between California’s major decriminalization laws, policies, and court decisions that have led to increases in violent crime and the victimization of innocent citizens

Sacramento, CA — Today, the [Peace Officers Research Association of California \(PORAC\)](#) released a new Decriminalization Timeline outlining California’s violent crime trends between 1985 and 2021. The Timeline uses data from the U.S. Department of Justice’s [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) to demonstrate the correlation between major laws, court decisions, and ballot measures that took place over the past 36 years and increases in violent crime. The data presented in the Timeline makes clear that when state leaders prioritize the apprehension and continued incarceration of violent criminals, the safety of Californians is enhanced. Conversely, when California focuses on reducing our prison population, reclassifying felonies as misdemeanors, and treating violent criminals as the “victims” of law enforcement, Californians are at a greater risk of harm.

“Most Californians aren’t even aware that in this state, rape by intoxication, rape of an unconscious person, drive-by shootings, or even the discharge of a firearm on school grounds, have been downgraded to ‘non-violent’ felonies,” said **PORAC President Brian Marvel**. “If these crimes were still classified as ‘violent crimes’, California’s violent crime trendline over the last decade would look a lot different. By reclassifying so many serious and violent felonies down to non-violent felonies and misdemeanors, Propositions 47 & 57 have artificially deflated the violent crime statistics in a manner that runs contrary to the lived experiences of so many Californians.”

The timeline focuses on three periods of criminal justice reform in California, beginning with the crime wave of the 1990s, tracking through the Public Safety Realignment that emptied our prisons, and then the more recent ballot measures that downgraded crimes to keep criminals on our streets instead of in prison:



“Decriminalization, while well-intentioned, can very easily turn into prioritizing the rights of convicted criminals over victims,” said **Crime Victims United President Nina Salarno**. “I think we all know that isn’t right, but that is what has happened here in California. It’s not the way our criminal justice system is supposed to work. If lawmakers are truly interested in the safety and well-being of their constituents, they will put every law through the lens of how it will impact victims first. It’s time we got back to that.”

While there are many factors that influence crime rates, like education, socioeconomic conditions, and geography, the Timeline emphasizes the significant impact of legislative actions on public safety. California over-corrected in addressing the state’s limited prison capacity issue when it downgraded many serious felonies to non-violent felonies and misdemeanors through Propositions 47 and 57. As the California Legislature enters a new session, PORAC urges elected officials to use the Decriminalization Timeline as a resource when considering further criminal justice and public safety reforms.

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About the Peace Officers Research Association of California:

The Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC) was incorporated in 1953 as a professional federation of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. PORAC represents over 78,000 public safety members and over 955 associations, making it the largest law enforcement organization in California and the largest statewide association in the nation.