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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DA Cynthia Zimmer Grateful For Local Support As Crime Initiative Presents 900,000 Signatures
Toward Ballot Qualification In November Election**

*Californians for Safer Communities Coalition Turns In More Than 900,000 Voter Signatures to Qualify
the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act for the November Election*

The Kern County District Attorney will be available for interviews today via phone or zoom to discuss the initiative and local efforts toward its passage. Members of the media may contact Daniela Gonzaga at (661) 868-2381 or dgonzaga@kernda.org to schedule an interview with Mrs. Zimmer.

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced today that the Californians for Safer Communities Coalition, a group that both she and other District Attorneys across the state have partnered with to make needed changes in criminal justice, has collected and will submit more than 900,000 voter signatures to qualify the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act (Initiative 23-0017A1) to qualify for the November General Election ballot. To qualify the measure for the ballot, state law requires 546,651 valid signatures.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the importance of the ballot initiative, stating;

“Kern County, like the rest of California, has reached its breaking point regarding the proliferation of organized retail theft, prevalence of homelessness, and epidemic of fentanyl deaths – all of which can be reduced if some of the unintended consequences of Proposition 47 are rolled back. This ballot initiative is the first and best chance for Californians to reclaim our state from the epidemics caused by weak laws in these areas. “

Passed in 2017, Proposition 47 achieved notable success in making California’s criminal justice system more equitable. However, it led to unintended consequences over the past decade – repeat and often organized retail theft have surged, and weak laws on drug use and sales have led to difficulty pushing addicts toward drug and mental health treatment. Compounded by a surge in deadly fentanyl impacting the

illegal drug market, these issues can only be corrected by voters with common sense changes to Proposition 47.

DA Cynthia Zimmer was grateful to Kern County's support in her office's effort to ensure the ballot qualifies for the ballot, stating;

“For the past several months, several community partners and members of the District Attorney's Office have joined me in working during lunches and weekends to spread the word about the importance of this initiative and to gather signatures in support of its passage. Kern County has long been a leader in defending victims rights and holding criminal offenders accountable, and I am grateful for the thousands of Kern residents that showed their support by signing petitions to get this initiative on the ballot.”

The proposed ballot measure will:

- Hold those who are committing repeated retail theft and fentanyl sales crimes accountable, for the safety and health of our communities.
- Create accountability for repeat smash-and-grab offenders who are driving up costs for all Californians and chasing retailers out of the state.
- Bring back incentives and accountability that are needed for individuals to get the necessary drug treatment and job training programs – helping them begin new lives. Currently those arrested multiple times for hard drug use have little incentive to choose treatment, as the consequences for drug use have been set too low by Proposition 47.

For more information on the initiative, please see www.CASafeCommunities.com