



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Yolo County District Attorney Continues To Support
Internal Conviction Integrity Program**

(Woodland, CA) – July 27, 2016 – The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office continues to fund and support a Conviction Integrity Unit to review post conviction assertions of innocence. The review unit was first launched in Yolo County in 2014. At that time, Yolo DA was one of the first prosecutor’s offices in California to implement such a program.

Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney Melinda Aiello heads up the unit. “While the trial and appellate process has significant safeguards to protect individuals, the criminal justice system is a human institution and mistakes are made in a small number of cases,” explained Aiello. “To safeguard against these wrongful convictions, the District Attorney’s Office will review previous convictions to ensure that justice is served and that those wrongfully convicted are exonerated.”

Defendants or any other member of the community, believing that there has been a wrongful conviction may submit their requests in writing to the Yolo County District Attorney’s Office. The claim does not need to be in any format or on a claim form, but the request must raise a meaningful claim of “actual innocence” of a crime. The request may not be merely an appeal for resentencing, a reweighing of conflicting evidence, or for relief from immigration consequences. The fact that claims have been previously rejected by a trial court or appellate court will not necessarily preclude further inquiry. Whether a case should be dismissed after conviction based upon factual innocence will be carefully considered.

The specialized unit will conduct an initial inquiry to determine whether further review or investigation is necessary and may review transcripts, evaluate forensic evidence in light of new scientific knowledge, conduct additional forensic tests, interview witnesses, or conduct any other investigation deemed necessary. This process supplements the appellate process already available to defendants and is designed to avoid the possibility of an innocent person being punished for a crime they did not commit.

In continuing to support the program, District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated: “A prosecutor’s role is to ensure that our system achieves justice which includes not only convicting the guilty but also guaranteeing the protection of the innocent. The conviction integrity unit helps us to obtain both of these goals.” For more information, visit the Yolo County District Attorney website at: <http://yoloda.org/the-das-office/conviction-integrity-unit/>.

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