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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo DA Attends Three Lifer Hearings Via Zoom over the 2 Days

(Woodland, CA) – December 10, 2020 – On December 8th and 9th, 2020, Yolo County prosecutors virtually attended three lifer parole hearings for inmates in three separate prisons across the state. The Yolo County District Attorney averages about 15 lifer hearings a year.

On December 8, 2020, a two-commissioner panel of the Board of Parole Hearings denied parole to 27-year-old Alejandro Sanchez who was sentenced to prison for 15 years-to-life in 2010. Deputy District Attorney Robin Johnson participated in the hearing. Sanchez is in prison at Avenal State Prison in Avenal, CA. At the time of the crime, Sanchez was a 16-year-old Woodland resident. On January 24, 2009, Woodland Police Department officers were dispatched to University of California Davis Medical Center in regard to a 14-year old female that had been raped. The victim had been with Sanchez and a group of others at a party where they had been drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. Later in the evening, Sanchez was driving the victim home and he stopped the car in the middle of the street and told her he was going to rape her, using explicit language. Sanchez then pulled the victim's hair as she tried to get out of the car. Sanchez choked her and held a knife to her head. Eventually, the victim passed out. During the course of the struggle Sanchez also bit the victim in the cheek. Forensic evidence revealed that she had been raped and all samples taken were matched to Sanchez. The victim also suffered a broken ankle as a result of jumping from the moving car. In denying parole, commissioners told Sanchez that he needed to continue his programming and work on his parole plans. Sanchez will be eligible for parole in 2023.

On December 9, 2020, Kenneth Smith was denied parole at CSP Solano in Vacaville, CA. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven attended this hearing, which was also conducted virtually, on behalf of the District Attorney's Office. In 1998, Smith was driving southbound on South River Road in Yolo County at approximately

5:30 a.m. This was shortly after he had raped his girlfriend and told her he wanted to kill himself. Bryan Tenney was driving in his car, headed into work. Smith attempted suicide by crossing the center line and colliding with the Tenney's vehicle. Tenney was killed as a result of the collision. A jury convicted Smith of murder and he was sentenced to a life term. Smith will be eligible for parole in three years.

Also on December 9, 2020, Board of Parole Hearings commissioners denied 82-year-old convicted murderer, William Keller, parole for a period of three years. Deputy District Attorney Robin Johnson represented the District Attorney's Office. Keller is currently in prison in the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, CA. In 1984, Keller killed Joseph Hosner, firing a shotgun at Hosner's head at close range. A Yolo County jury convicted Keller of murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of that murder. Keller was sentenced to 17-years-to-life in prison. In reading their decision, Commissioners told Keller that he continued to lack insight in his criminality and had not taken part in programming to address this issue. This was the eighth occasion that the Board of Parole Hearings has Keller's request for parole. Keller will be eligible for his next hearing in 2023.

The Yolo County District Attorney's Lifer Division was started by District Attorney Jeff Reisig in 2007. When criminals are sentenced to state prison for life with the possibility of parole, they have a right to parole hearings to determine whether they are suitable for release from state prison. The Lifer Division supports victims of violent crimes at these hearings by ensuring they have an opportunity to be heard. Attorneys in the Division also help make sure that prison inmates who are still a danger to society are not released.

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