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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo DA Sponsors Criminal Reform Bill
AB 2778 and AB 2418 were drafted by the Yolo County District Attorney

(Woodland, CA) – April 20, 2022 – On April 19, 2022, two significant criminal justice bills drafted by the Yolo County District Attorney passed the first hurdle on their way to becoming laws.

AB 2778 and AB 2418 both proposed groundbreaking changes to criminal justice and were scheduled for hearings in the California Assembly Public Safety Committee. AB 2778, authored by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty and co-sponsored, as well as drafted, by the Yolo County District Attorney and Attorney General Rob Bonta, seeks to require the California Department of Justice to establish and implement a “Race Blind Charging” system that all prosecutors must implement by January 2025. Specifically, the process would require a review of a case where the race of the suspect, victim, or witness has been removed. The Yolo County District Attorney launched its first-of-a-kind Race Blind Charging program on August 31, 2021. The Stanford Computational Policy Lab (SCPL) designed a computer program specifically for DA Reisig’s office that automatically redacts information in police reports that identify an individual’s race. Attorney General Bonta met with DA Reisig in January and the pair decided to seek an author in the legislature to take the program to all DAs in the state. On April 19th, the bill passed through Assembly Public Safety “on consent,” which means no opposition was voiced to the bill in that committee.

AB 2418, authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra, is co-sponsored, and was also drafted by the Yolo County District Attorney. In recent years, the Yolo County District Attorney’s Office began publishing all of its prosecution data to constituents in the interests of transparency and to foster robust conversations regarding criminal justice reform. To that end, Yolo DA partnered with the non-profit Measures for Justice (MFJ) to develop an interactive “dashboard” populated with Yolo criminal justice data called Commons. This dashboard is the first in the nation where the data is independently verified by a third party – MFJ. Yolo DA has already used data from Commons to focus priorities and drive policy change. After a meeting with Attorney General Bonta, Assemblymember Kalra was contacted to author and carry a bill which would require prosecutors

statewide, under the guidance of the Attorney General, to gather and provide multiple data points to the Attorney General concerning the prosecution of cases. At the hearing on Tuesday, DA Reisig and Yoel Haile of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) spoke in favor of the bill. The bill was sponsored by ACLU, Yolo County District Attorney, Prosecutor's Alliance and San Francisco County District Attorney. The bill was also supported by ACLU California Action, the California Public Defenders Association, and the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. The bill passed through the committee with no opposition and five Aye votes.

Assemblymember Kalra thanked DA Reisig for his leadership, stating "this has already been a gamechanger." DA Reisig stressed the importance of the bill to criminal justice transparency. "Our data is the people's data. Publicizing this data, including the good, the bad, and the ugly, will foster the conversations necessary to tackle our most challenging criminal justice issues." In describing the drafting of the bill, DA Reisig said, "this has been such a fulfilling journey with input and support from the Attorney General, the ACLU, and the Public Defenders Association. I look forward to AB 2418 moving to the Assembly floor."

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