



COUNTY OF YOLO
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**Yolo County District Attorney Announces Two New Significant
Criminal Justice Laws Modeled After Yolo County**

(Woodland, CA) – October 5, 2022 – On September 29, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed two significant criminal justice bills into law which were modeled after programs at the Yolo County District Attorney’s Office.

AB 2778, authored by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty and co-sponsored, as well as drafted, by the Yolo County District Attorney, 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, ultimately working with Assemblymember McCarty to pass the bill, which was signed into law last Thursday. District Attorney Reisig applauded the joint effort: “Justice should be blind. Blind charging criminal cases helps build public trust in the process and improves the integrity of all prosecutions.”

AB 2418 calls for transparency and publication of criminal prosecution data statewide and is authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra. AB 2418 was also drafted by the Yolo County District Attorney with significant drafting contributions from co-sponsor the ACLU of California and the non-profit Measures for Justice (MFJ); AB 2418 was also co-sponsored and supported in production by the Prosecutor’s Alliance of California and the San Francisco 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 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 with oversight through an independent panel. The bill was sponsored by CA ACLU, Yolo County District Attorney, Prosecutor’s Alliance and San Francisco County District Attorney. The bill was also supported by the California Public Defenders Association, and the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice.

DA Reisig stressed the importance of the new law 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 Measures for Justice. I look forward to further collaborations with our partners in implementing the new law.”

The Chair of Yolo County’s Multi-Cultural Community Council, Tessa Smith, shared her experience of working on these bills. “Our council enjoyed this critical journey. DA Reisig asked us for our opinion, and we shared with him the good, the bad, and the ugly. We told him what the people wanted and needed to know so that we could foster the necessary growth to ensure the community’s trust in the criminal justice system. He listened and heard us. And now we have these two important new laws that will benefit all Californians.”

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