



## Local Law Enforcement

and the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act  
A California Voter Initiative — November 2000

The Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act will positively impact rank-and-file law enforcement by reducing the number of non-violent drug offenders rotating through the revolving door of arrest and release. Currently, drug dependent offenders cycle through the system, leaving fewer resources available for officers to focus on more serious or violent crimes.

This cycle erodes the ability of law enforcement to function optimally. According to a 1996 study by the Police Foundation and Drug Strategies, two national non-profit organizations, 59 percent of police chiefs believe that non-violent, drug offenders should be placed in court-supervised treatment programs rather than be incarcerated. The same report found that 60 percent of police chiefs believe that police and other law enforcement agencies have been unsuccessful in reducing the drug problem in the United States.

Drug treatment provided for offenders under the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act will reduce the number of repeat drug offenders passing through local criminal justice venues. According to the 1994 California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment (CALDATA) study, criminal activity drops 66 percent after offenders receive substance abuse treatment. The initiative will allocate \$120 million per year to support a variety of rehabilitation programs and services for non-violent drug offenders so they can end their cycle of addiction, crime and arrest.

The Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act may also help to reduce some of the risks involved in street-level law enforcement. Law enforcement officers often report that they face the highest level of risk in situations involving the abuse of alcohol or drugs, such as domestic violence. In 1997, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that substance or abuse was a factor in well over two-thirds of domestic violence incidents. While substance abuse may not be the sole cause of domestic violence, the job of law enforcement can be made safer by addressing the relationship between the two, and providing treatment services that include counseling and other services.

**Fifty-nine percent of police chiefs believe that drug offenders should be treated rather than incarcerated.**

— *Drugs and Crime Across America: Police Chiefs Speak Out*, Police Foundation & Drug Strategies, '96

**Criminal activity drops 66 percent after offenders receive substance abuse treatment.**

— *General Report*, CALDATA, '94

All research references are available upon request.

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