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**Twitter: @ProsAlliance**

**CONTACT: Max Szabo | 415.828.6158**

**PROSECUTORS FORM FIRST-IN-THE NATION ALLIANCE TO FIGHT THE POLITICS  
OF MASS INCARCERATION  
AND END THE FAILED STRATEGIES OF THE PAST**

*Bi-Partisan Prosecutors Alliance to Provide Education, Training, and Advocate for  
Initiatives and Legislation That Enhance Safety, Equity and Justice*

**SACRAMENTO**—Today, current and former elected District Attorneys from across the state joined forces to create the Prosecutors Alliance of California. The announcement by District Attorneys Diana Becton, Chesa Boudin, George Gascón, and Tori Verber Salazar follows nationwide protests and growing distrust in a criminal justice system mired in systemic racism. The Alliance stands alone among law enforcement organizations in its commitment to modern and sustainable approaches to achieving safety and community health at the state and local level. It is the nation’s first progressive law enforcement association to have an advocacy arm, enabling the group to weigh in on state legislation, ballot initiatives and candidate races.

“Prosecutors are elected advocates for the people, and the people need their advocates to lead the conversation on criminal justice reform instead of delaying and denying the need for systemic change,” ***said Prosecutors Alliance Founder and Executive Director, Cristine Soto DeBerry.*** “It’s time to give voice to the growing number of reform leaders within law enforcement. They reject the traditional police and prosecutor association approach to safety that breaks the bank and destroys the fabric of our communities.”

The Prosecutors Alliance of California is a non-profit organization that will provide public education, support and training to prosecutors and their offices. The Prosecutors Alliance of California *Action Fund* is a social welfare organization that will draft and advocate for criminal justice reform legislation, educate and engage the public on criminal justice ballot measures, and support candidates for state and local office who advocate for comprehensive reforms to our justice system.

“This is not a debate that’s happening solely in the streets, it’s happening in the legislature and at the highest levels of government,” ***said Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton.*** “We

need a voice at the table that represents us *and* understands we must pursue modern alternatives to the status-quo.”

“Traditional law enforcement organizations abide by a philosophy that hasn’t changed for 40 years,” **said San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin.** “Ultimately, law enforcement unions have a vested interest in tough-on-crime policies, as criminalization leads to more police and correctional officers, and more money for the unions that represent them. The safest communities don’t have police on every corner, and from San Francisco to Sacramento, we can no longer allow these groups to distort what’s in their interest with what’s in the interest of your safety.”

The necessity of a forward-thinking law enforcement voice has become increasingly clear in recent months. For example, when law enforcement officers engage in unconstitutional policing and there are delays in the condemnation, arrest, and charging of those officers, the public perceives a failure on the part of the prosecutor to meet their responsibility and there is an erosion of the promise of equal justice. But when a prosecutor’s personal or political interests suggest the delay or denial to pursue a police officer may be motivated by a financial relationship with the involved officer, trust in our system quickly—and completely—dissolves. For this reason, the founding four members recently joined forces to call on the California State Bar to change the rules of professional responsibility to #CureTheConflict of interest that occurs when elected DAs take law enforcement union money and then review misconduct cases against the same unions’ members. Traditional law enforcement organizations were quick to oppose the measure. In fact, one such opponent, the California District Attorneys Association, has a board made up entirely of elected prosecutors who have accepted and benefited from police union money in their respective elections.

“Law enforcement unions use their considerable resources and the symbolism of the badge to pressure lawmakers to heel or face being labeled ‘soft on crime,’” **said former San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón.** “But they perverted that symbol and falsely invoked the veil of safety to promote their self-interests, and that has come at the expense of the health and well-being of the communities they are sworn to protect and serve. Prosecutors work for you, not the police, and free from the influence of police union money the Prosecutors Alliance will level the playing field as the public and lawmakers alike seek to reform our dated system of justice.”

“A broad spectrum of political ideologies believe in a smaller, less punitive, and more equitable system of justice,” said **San Joaquin County District Attorney, Tori Verber Salazar.** “This is one of the few issues in America’s discourse upon which Republicans and Democrats can find common ground, and we welcome prosecutors from across the political spectrum to join us. All you need is the courage to challenge the status quo and the ability to reflect and grow.”

The Prosecutors Alliance of California is the first such progressive law enforcement association in the nation to engage in advocacy at the state and local levels. However, prosecutors in Virginia and Missouri are interested in bringing a new voice to their jurisdictions as well.

"The definition of insanity is doubling down on the same tough on crime strategies that failed to make us safer and expecting a different result," **said Circuit Attorney for the City of St. Louis, Kim Gardner.** "Black and brown communities are disproportionately victimized, arrested and incarcerated. To level the playing field public safety professionals must focus on the root causes of crime, we must retire a dated approach that focuses on punishment at the expense of getting results for our communities. Our voices are louder when we're organized, and together we can bring our criminal justice system out of the dark ages."

"It's the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it's time to reject the failed policies that defined the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," **said Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales.** "A group of status quo prosecutors should not be allowed to dictate what is and what is not in the interests of safety when young black and brown people are the ones victimized and incarcerated at disproportionate rates. We need a new paradigm in criminal justice, and several of my colleagues in Virginia have joined me as we seek to build a new voice in our community. The Prosecutors Alliance could help us get there faster."

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For more information about the Prosecutors Alliance go to [www.ProsecutorsAlliance.org](http://www.ProsecutorsAlliance.org) and keep up with our work on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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