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April 17, 2017

The Honorable Melissa Melendez  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3098  
Sacramento, CA 94249

**RE: AB 27 (Melendez) Violent felonies: sex offenses. – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Melendez,

The Association of California Cities – Orange County (ACC-OC) would like to express its support for Assembly Bill 27 (Melendez). AB 27 would expand the California Penal Code definition of “violent felonies” to include sex crimes that are very serious and violent in nature. ACC-OC was founded in 2011 as the hub for good public policy representing the interests of Orange County cities, and is committed to supporting county-wide partners and regional public safety leaders through the advocacy of important legislation like AB 27.

The recent passage of Proposition 57 by California voters absolutely necessitates legislation such as AB 27. After the passage of Proposition 47, four of Orange County’s largest cities saw a significant increase in violent crime. Law enforcement officials spoke out strongly in opposition to Prop 57 when it was on the ballot, and now that it has passed their opposition has only grown. Within the last month a veteran Whittier police officer was shot and killed by a recent parolee during a routine traffic stop, a crime that officers blamed on legislation such as Propositions 47 and 57. In order to protect not only our communities but our local law enforcement officials, legislation to stem the release of violent criminals back on to the streets must be enacted.

Currently, the California Penal Code only classifies rape as a violent felony if it is committed by force or by threat. Therefore, criminals who have committed any other form of rape are considered non-violent felons, and eligible for early parole under Prop 57. This is clearly unacceptable and highlights the absolute necessity of AB 27 in order to protect our communities. By expanding the definition of “violent felonies” to include crimes already deemed serious or dangerous by the legislature, such as rape, sodomy, penetration with a foreign object, or oral copulation occurring while the victim was unconscious or otherwise unable to give full and knowing consent, AB 27 represents an important step in the right direction.

Existing law classifies certain felonies as violent felonies for purposes of various provisions of the Penal Code, and generally imposes an additional one-year term for a felony and 3-year term for a violent felony for each prior separate prison term served for a felony or a violent felony, respectively. The passage of AB 27 would ensure that a criminal previously convicted of a sex offense such as those mentioned above would have the stated additional



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3-year term added to his sentence. Without AB 27 such a criminal would only serve an additional one-year term, resulting in a much faster return to our streets. AB 27 will help ensure that criminals do not re-enter our communities before their time has been served.

The safety of California's cities is of paramount importance, and should always be addressed as swiftly and decisively as possible. For this and the reasons described above, the Association of California Cities – Orange County is proud to support AB 27. Should you have any questions about our position or about ACC-OC, please contact Diana Coronado, ACC-OC's Legislative Affairs Director, at (714) 953-1300 or at [dcoronado@accoc.org](mailto:dcoronado@accoc.org).

Sincerely,

Heather Stratman  
Chief Executive Officer  
Association of California Cities – Orange County