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Senator: Videotaped CYA Beating Warrants Charges

CCPOA Spokesman: Video Doesn't Show What Took Place In Office

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- A videotape released Thursday that shows the beating of wards by California Youth Authority guards has prompted one senator to call for local prosecutors to reconsider filing charges in the case.

The videotape, taken Jan. 20, 2004, shows a correctional officer punching one CYA ward 28 times even after the teen was already lying face down on the ground. The videotape, shot inside Stockton's N.A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility, also shows a second correctional officer punching and kicking a second ward.

The Stockton District Attorney's Office has declined to file criminal charges against the youth counselors involved in the beatings. The matter is currently under review by the California Attorney General's Office.

On Friday, state Sen. Gloria Romero, D-Los Angeles, using the pressure of the videotape evidence, called on local or state prosecutors to file criminal charges against the officers involved.

"I do call upon the District Attorney of San Joaquin County to reconsider his decision to not file criminal charges in this case," Romero said. "That is where I believe this case belongs. That is where it should originate. That is where I'm calling on the district attorney to reconsider, and I hope review the evidence, review the report and file."

So far, only the wards have had charges filed against them.



In reaction to the videotape release, California Correctional Peace Officers Association spokesman Dave Darchuk said he thought "it was premature." He also said it was "a mistake, given the ongoing investigation." Darchuk also said the videotape does not show how, he says, the wards provoked the response from the officers.

Video



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"It doesn't show what took place in the office," Darchuk said.

San Joaquin County Assistant District Attorney Jim Willett said his office will not be swayed by Romero's pressure.

"We have made our decision based on the fact that there was no reasonable likelihood of a conviction based on the evidence not shown on the videotape," Willett said.

Romero is Chair of the Senate Select Committee on the California Correctional System, which studies California policy issues and problems related to corrections and develops longer-range solutions. Romero also sits as a member on the Senate Committee on Public Safety, which meets on a regular basis throughout the legislative year on issues concerning public safety.

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