

Failure with Garrido prompts legislative effort to reform parole

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

With the Phillip Garrido fiasco as a backdrop, legislative and law enforcement leaders today agreed to work toward preventing a similar one.

In a public meeting at the state Capitol convened by state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson, officials discussed the failures that led to Jaycee Lee Dugard remaining Garrido's captive for 18 years and offered ideas on how to improve supervision of sex offenders.

Gaines said he plans to introduce legislation soon to address a state Supreme Court decision from 2008 that he and Pierson say has created a spike in the number of inmates serving life sentences who are winning release from parole boards.

That decision held that a parole board may not base a decision on whether to release an inmate solely upon the circumstances of the crime that sent the inmate to prison. Because of that decision, from 2008 through 2010, 1,329 lifers have been granted parole, Pierson said, compared to 1,821 from 1978 through 2007.

Pierson contends that the law needs to be changed to allow parole boards to consider not only psychiatric and other reports on an inmate's behavior but also the nature of the crime.

Gaines said he believes such a change in the law can win widespread support.

Read the whole story