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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE CHICO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSES PROPOSITION 57**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2016: This week, at their regularly scheduled September Board meeting, the Chico Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose Proposition 57, the Public Safety & Rehabilitation Act of 2016, and strongly urges members and citizens to take note.

Crime rose 4.23% in Chico in 2015, a statistic many have attributed to the passage of AB 109 and Proposition 47 which was voted into law in 2014. Law enforcement specialists believe Proposition 57 will increase these damaging effects, weakening the criminal justice system even further without providing needed rehabilitative services.

As written, Proposition 57 will allow violent, dangerous and adult career criminals to be released from prison early, including crimes related to domestic violence, rape, discharging a firearm on school grounds, and more: <http://www.stop57.com/>

Prior to opposing Proposition 57, the Chico Chamber of Commerce lobbied the California Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to take a stance on public safety and oppose the proposition.

In a letter to CalChamber, Katie Simmons, President & CEO of the Chico Chamber of Commerce, stated, "Reducing the overhead of our prison system to lessen the load on taxpayers simply shifts the financial burden to our streets. Our members report spending tens of thousands of dollars on fencing, surveillance, private patrol, and lost customers due to an unsafe environment. The cost of rising crime in Chico is not intangible – it is real and has created an admitted distraction from the issues we've traditionally focused on for the protection and preservation of our businesses. If Proposition 57 passes due to its misleading title, we will experience social and economic setbacks that will take decades to recover from if we ever right the ship."

Citing, "limited bandwidth," CalChamber voted to take no position.

Public safety has been the #1 advocacy priority for the Chico Chamber since 2011. Directors share their thoughts on Proposition 57:

"I can't imagine anything more important to business community statewide than public safety. It is one of the basic issues that must be addressed for business success or other issues become irrelevant. Unfortunately, crime in California is on the rise and appears not to be getting the attention it deserves." Tom Lando, Tom Lando Consulting

"Two recent pieces of legislation that have passed, AB109 and Prop 47, have brought an increase in crimes to our areas that have impacted the quality of life significantly. I have seen theft and vandalism claims increase in our part of the state and the level of frustration for business owners continually grow. These crimes impact the businesses themselves, their employees, and their customers. As the economy continues to improve and efforts are focused on fighting new taxes and regulations, let's not forget about the communities that California businesses operate in. Most businesses wouldn't exist without support from their local community and if their local community is continually impacted by quality of life crimes that lead them to seek residence in another state, this is a problem that should be top priority. Taxes, regulations, and last but certainly not least more criminals impacting quality of life in our communities is not something anyone wants and further negatively impacts the California business climate." Brett Sanders, Farmers Insurance, Office of Brad Jacobson

"Violent criminals are just that. Our community has been inundated with crime and the Chico Chamber of Commerce has been working tirelessly on public safety as the number one priority because it truly matters to ensure Chico remains a safe and vibrant beautiful city. Prop 57 is not the answer to our prison overcrowding problem. What is the answer to our prison overcrowding problem is exactly what the Chico Police Department is doing right now with few resources. Community policing is the answer and insisting that our business community stand together to move Chico forward. We all deserve a better future and together we have been making it happen." Angela Casler, Sustainability Management Consulting.

Chief Michael O'Brien, says, "Many statewide organizations have failed to take a position on Proposition 57. It is up to communities and local organizations like the Chico Chamber to educate voters on the impacts of legislation like Proposition 57 and encourage citizens to make an informed decision at the polls. Community-oriented policing - the model of the Chico Police Department - requires citizen engagement to be successful and the business community is a key piece of this. I support the Chico Chamber and their efforts to inform our community about the realities of Proposition 57."

For further information regarding the Chico Chamber of Commerce contact Katie Simmons, President & CEO, katie@chicochamber.com, 530.891.5556 x 303.

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