

# California State Senate

SENATE MINORITY LEADER BRIAN W. JONES  
FORTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



September 14, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Request for Veto of SB 81 (Skinner)**

Dear Governor Newsom:

I respectfully request your veto of Senate Bill 81, which further skews parole hearings in favor of the violent felon by establishing a process that requires the courts to review and reverse a decision to deny parole unless specified evidentiary burdens can be met, which strips away existing judicial discretion and undermines gubernatorial authority.

This bill requires the court to review parole denials based on a single factor while ignoring the full range of considerations otherwise required. Additionally, the bill denies courts their role as a gatekeeper in these cases and forces them to review cases with a presumption for reversal based on the low standard of "preponderance of the evidence."

Numerous existing procedures are in place to ensure accountability and fairness at parole hearings, including a vetted state board, gubernatorial authority, and the ability for an inmate to petition for judicial review of their case.

SB 81 drastically tips the scale in favor of the release of violent felons whom the board and governor have determined are not suitable for release for any number of reasons, such as failure to show remorse for victims, failure to accept their role in the crime, future risk of danger, and more.

This bill is an attempt to secure earlier release for murderers and other violent felons regardless of whether they are truly ready to be released into our communities again.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your veto.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Jones".

Brian Jones  
Senate Minority Leader  
40<sup>th</sup> Senate District