

Prop 36 is changing the culture

January 15, 2025



Newly enacted Proposition 36 is profoundly impacting the Golden State. The public spoke emphatically when it voted to allow felony charges and increase for certain drug and theft crimes. Law and order has returned to California.

The Triplicate contacted the Crescent City Police, the Del Norte Sheriff and the District Attorney's Office to weigh in on Prop 36 impact on our local community.

Chief Richard Griffin:

“We had not stopped arresting people prior to Prop. 36. Unfortunately, it was a cited and release issue most often for Petty Theft or drug charges though, if they have prior convictions. What changes now is that we can add felony charges if there have been prior convictions and bookings in the County jail. We have already been able to utilize this (intervention) on several occasions and the District Attorney is picking up the prosecution on them.”

Chief Griffin continued, “My opinion is Prop 36 is going to be a good thing for citizens and businesses in Crescent City.”

Garrett Scott, Del Norte Sheriff: “Prop 36 is a good start at holding criminals accountable. Law enforcement has been hampered at so many angles at curtailing crime and arresting criminals.”

The Sheriff continued, “As this legislation passed, I was pleased to see that we would now be able to hold these criminals in custody until they see a magistrate and then add crimes for prior theft charges. I know this proposition will likely create burden upon the Sheriff’s Office in terms of holding, feeding, filling mental health need this population. I will make it work. Our state has pushed corrections and rehabilitation so far

back onto local sheriffs, as opposed to State Prison sentences that require additional funding to ensure the effectiveness of arrest and prosecution protocol for these thugs who continue to repeatedly violate the law. Our District Attorney will be accountable and will need funding to be effective, as well. Voters overwhelmingly passed this law because they are fed up with lawlessness and lack of teeth that California has created for local law enforcement. Prop 36 is a great tool and a proactive instrument we will be using to deal with theft and drug problems we face that are rampant in our Del Norte communities. An important component of Prop 36 is the drug rehabilitation option to once again these folks back into our community and respecting law abiding folks. I am optimistic we are moving in the right direction with Prop 36.”

The Del Norte District Attorney:

Deputy District Attorney Eric Bryant spoke on behalf of DA Katie Micks.

“I’ve been a Deputy Del Norte DA since 2017. Since Prop 36 has taken effect (January 3, 2025), the DA’s Office has filed six felony cases for theft, with two qualifying prior convictions and filed two felony cases for drug possession, with two prior convictions. Five of the Prop 36 cases involve four defendants who are well-known to local law enforcement as people who frequently steal and these four defendants are being held in custody, pending the outcome of these cases, when previously it was likely would be booked and released and given a court date. Arrested would rarely appear for their court date. None of these cases have been settled yet and none have been set for trial. It has been frustrating being a prosecutor without having the legal tools needed to effectively fight crime. I’m much more optimistic with the passage of Prop 36. It’s a good law that helps push and deter the handful of people in our community the majority of thefts. Let’s hope that when people are given a choice incarceration or drug treatment, they will choose drug treatment and succeed.”

Those who participated in sharing their opinion agreed additional funding will be needed to ensure the success of Prop 36 and referenced the role the Dept of Health and Human Services can play in providing funding from its Emergency Funds account.