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New Riverbed Fence to Solve Homelessness is a Band-Aid and not a solution *Fencing in Santa Ana Does Not Take Place of Filing Criminal Cases*

SANTA ANA – An announcement Thursday about new fencing along the Santa Ana River Trail near a residential area is not enough to solve ongoing nuisances and criminal elements of homelessness in neighborhoods.

[A survey of Orange County voters last year](#) found that homelessness and affordable housing were their top concerns.

“This easygoing mentality of pandering to the homeless has only allowed this problem to flourish,” Spitzer said. “The County has spent \$147 million this year to expand our system of care and bring services to get individuals off the street. But all of this is meaningless if the homeless won’t take services offered. The District Attorney has a history of not prosecuting crimes that may be committed by the homeless population.”

Although the District Attorney’s Office is prosecuting a homeless arsonist, other crimes have not received the same scrutiny.

“Now is the time to toughen up on enforcing homeless crimes, we have done everything possible to help get the homeless off the streets,” Spitzer said. “If they do not want to cooperate and commit crimes we must be vigilant prosecuting those cases.”

Spitzer led the effort to clean up the Santa Ana River Trail in 2017, which has restored the area to its intended use of recreational activities like walking and bicycling.

Spitzer led the effort to open the County’s first homeless shelter and service center in Anaheim, Bridges at Kraemer Place. The facility is a model countywide. He was also instrumental in finding a site for mental health patients to receive treatment in Orange. The project is in the beginning stage.

“As I said a year ago -- I will not let Orange County become a Skid Row,” Spitzer said. “We were headed down that path where the riverbed was a no-go zone, just like in Los Angeles. This cannot happen here. We're offering people services and housing. If they don’t take it, they are vagrants and subject to arrest. We've got room in the jails for people who are not following the law. We need to be forceful but compassionate. Just erecting a fence isn’t good enough.”

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