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**NEWS RELEASE**



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**DA Nasarenko Testifies in Sacramento to Strengthen  
Misdemeanor Sexual Battery Laws**

VENTURA, Calif. - District Attorney Erik Nasarenko testified before the California Senate Committee on Public Safety today in support of Senate Bill 442 (SB 442). SB 442 seeks to amend section 243.4 of the Penal Code, relating to sexual battery. This amendment would expand the criminal definition of sexual battery and close a gap that currently exists.

Current law defines a misdemeanor violation of sexual battery as the unwanted touching of the intimate body part of another person. SB 442 would make it a misdemeanor for a person to cause a victim to touch an intimate part of the suspect, the victim or a third person.

“The current law doesn’t properly capture the conduct or acknowledge the wrongdoing,” said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “By correcting this omission in the law, SB 442 will bring voice to victims and hold individuals who commit sexual battery accountable.”

SB 442 was authored by Senator Monique Limón and sponsored by the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office.

In 2022, District Attorney Nasarenko was informed of a Ventura County case where the alleged perpetrator took the victim’s hand and placed it onto his groin over the clothing. Disturbed that the conduct could only be punished as simple battery because the victim made the physical contact rather than the perpetrator, Nasarenko contacted Limón to see if she would consider sponsoring legislation to amend the statute.

“Victims feel no less violated when it is their hands forced to touch another person than when another person touches them,” said Senator Limón during the hearing.

“I thank Senator Limón for bringing this issue to the forefront and I thank the committee for its decisive action moving this Bill forward,” Nasarenko added.

The Bill was approved 5-0 by the Senate Committee on Public Safety and moves on to the Senate Appropriations Committee to focus on potential cost elements to this proposed change in the Penal Code.