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## Editor's Note

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By the enactment of Senate Bill 42 and Assembly Bill 476, the California Legislature has made a radical departure from the former theory and practice of criminal incarceration in this state. The determinate sentence law became operative on July 1, 1977, and members of the bench and bar will have been working with the provisions of the new law for six months at the time of this publication. It has become apparent during this period that the new law is extremely complex and that the changes it has made are not free of problems that will require resolution by the courts and legislature.

The Editors of the *Pacific Law Journal* are fortunate to have two authors who were involved in the development and implementation of the new law, and who are able to give our readers the benefit of their experience. In the following article the authors describe the events leading to the enactment of the determinate sentence law, explain its provisions, and indicate the problems that are likely to be faced by those working with the new law. The intricacies and ambiguities contained in the law are highlighted by the authors. In an effort to present this complex piece of legislation to a general audience, however, the authors also have reviewed concepts and terminology that may be common knowledge to those in the criminal justice community.

Undoubtedly, the determinate sentence law will be the subject of continued analysis and refinement. We hope that this article will not only serve as an introduction to this law but will also act as a catalyst for future debate and discourse.

*Robert M. West*