



May 29, 2018

SENATE FLOOR ALERT

SB 1303 (Pan) – Coroner: county office of the medical examiner. As Amended on April 16, 2018 – OPPOSE Senate Third Reading File

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Urban Counties of California (UCC) oppose Senate Bill 1303 (Pan) as it removes counties local control to decide how to organize their operations and could result in unnecessary upheaval in counties.

Senate Bill 1303 mandates that non-charter counties with a population of 500,000 or greater abolish the office of the coroner or the sheriff's coroner's office and replace it with the office of the medical examiner—which the county boards of supervisors **already** have the statutory power to do.

This bill would have a significant fiscal impact on at least five counties—including Riverside, Contra Costa, Kern, Stanislaus and Sonoma. On April 24, 2018, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors voted to create an independent Office of the Medical Examiner. The initial estimated cost to create this new office is an additional \$1.3 million in ongoing costs to their current budget. An expenditure of this size could prove to be detrimental to a county's budget and the county board of supervisors is in the best position to determine if their county has the fiscal ability to absorb such an expense.

Finally, there is a nationwide shortage of forensic pathologists. A Department of Justice study estimated that there are only 500 Board Certified forensic pathologists in the United States that are currently practicing forensic pathology fulltime. (<https://www.justice.gov/archives/ncfs/page/file/641641/download>.) Senate Bill 1303 requires that the office of the medical examiner be led by a forensic pathologist—this could not only lead to recruitment issues, but it also puts these professionals in an administrative function, instead of performing exams.

It is for these reasons that CSAC and UCC regretfully oppose Senate Bill 1303 and requests your **NO** vote. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Devencenzi, CSAC Legislative Representative at jdevencenzi@counties.org or Jolena Voorhis, UCC Executive Director at Jolena@urbancounties.com.