



CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
OF CALIFORNIA

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Jim Beall
California State Senate
State Capitol Building, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Senate Bill 284 (Beall) – Juvenile justice: county support of wards.
As Introduced February 13, 2019 - Oppose
Set to be heard March 26, 2019 in the Senate Public Safety Committee**

Dear Senator Beall:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), we write in opposition to Senate Bill 284, which would increase the fee charged to counties to send a youth to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

Probation departments and counties throughout California have invested millions of dollars, countless staff time and other resources to ensure our departments reflect the values we know guide a therapeutic and rehabilitative environment for youth. The health, welfare, and safety of the youth and our communities continue to be the guiding principles in looking at the most appropriate response based on an individual's circumstances. To this end, California counties and probation departments have clearly demonstrated a commitment to serving youth locally whenever possible, in the least restrictive setting, as evidenced by the over 74% decline in the youth committed to DJJ, and over 60% decline in juvenile detention in its entirety. In fact, over 90% of youth served in California's juvenile justice system are safely treated in the community.

That said, the continuum of care for youth who enter our juvenile justice system is critical to have the kind of success in juvenile justice like California has seen in the past decade. While the vast majority of youth are safely served at the front-end of that continuum, in our communities, we must responsibly address all points in that continuum of care. For those youth at the other end of the continuum who qualify for DJJ placement and whose risks and needs rise to the level of requiring state investment and responsibility, the state has an important role to invest in youth who require this kind of specialized treatment. This option for youth is needed to be able to successfully rehabilitate and ultimately, successfully return them to our communities.

While we certainly understand the author's goal of incentivizing counties to reduce the number of youth that they send to DJJ, the final decision as to where youth are placed following adjudication is one held and decided by a juvenile court judge. This legislation will do little to prevent youth from being sent to DJJ and instead result in significant financial impacts on counties. This fiscal impact, especially in smaller counties, will negatively impact counties and the progress we have made to enhance services and could put programming for youth in jeopardy.

We look forward to engaging in continued discussions with you and your office on this important issue, but for reasons stated above we must oppose SB 284.

Sincerely,



Jessica Devencenzi
Legislative Representative
California State Association of Counties



Danielle Sanchez
Legislative Director
Chief Probation Officers of California