



September 13, 2019

VIA Email to Author and the Office of the Governor

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
ATTN: Legislative Unit

RE: AB 45 (Stone) - Eliminating Copays in Prisons and Jails - SIGNATURE REQUEST

Dear Governor Newsom:

The League of Women Voters of California writes to urge your signature on AB 45 (Stone), which eliminates co-payments for medical and dental services inside California prisons and jails.

The existing system creates an inequitable distribution of medical care among people who are incarcerated. In the context of an 8 cent an hour minimum wage, a 5 dollar co-payment clearly places medical visits out of reach for many.¹ The fee discourages people from seeking treatment, exacerbates medical conditions, leads to negative health outcomes and the necessity for more expensive care, and, by fostering the spread of communicable disease, is detrimental to public health.

People who are incarcerated are already at higher risk due to conditions of confinement like crowding, malnutrition, stress and trauma. California's legal obligation to provide access to medical care for people in prisons should not be distorted by policies that allow those with money to seek help, while forcing those without to choose between incurring crippling medical debt or suffering.

The League of Women Voters supports access to health care. We believe that the ability of a patient to pay should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources. People who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available, have the right to services sufficient to meet their basic medical needs.

The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports AB 45 (Stone) and respectfully urges you to sign this bill. California should ensure equitable access to health care for people in prisons and jails and catch up with other states that have abolished co-payments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Moon Goldberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Moon Goldberg
President