



March 22, 2023

The Honorable María Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate and Budget Fiscal Review
Subcommittee No. 5
1021 O Street, Suite 7530
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee
No. 5
1021 O Street, Suite 5620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Budget Issue 5225 – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Division of Juvenile Justice Closure

Dear Chairs Durazo and Bonta:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), and Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC), we write to offer the county perspective on the imminent closure of the state's Division of Juvenile Justice facilities. As we understand it, upwards of 200 young people will remain in the care and custody of DJJ on the final closure date of June 30, 2023. Our interest is to ensure a safe, smooth, and coordinated transition for these youth by having the appropriate programs and placements available in their county of commitment and to fully support them once in local custody and care.

Successful reintegration of this particular population of young people in their home communities and longer-term success demonstrated by recidivism reduction can only be achieved if resources accompany the transfer of this high-need population. The vulnerability and destabilization caused by the move out of a state facility heighten the need for a seamless transfer into an individually designed treatment plan and developmentally appropriate therapeutic setting best suited to address the young person's needs. We understand that DJJ staff are communicating with county probation departments on a case-by-case basis to prepare for transfers, and that work is appreciated.

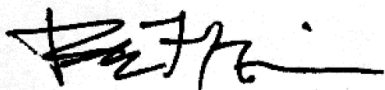
What is absolutely critical for a successful transition of this population to county care regrettably is lacking – the appropriate resources to support the young people who will

be transferred from a DJJ facility to a local jurisdiction between now and the closure of the state's facilities. When SB 823 was conceived and enacted in 2020, the realignment design contemplated a prospective transfer of responsibility beginning on July 1, 2021; resources for those youth accompanied the shift in responsibility and were enumerated in statute. Importantly, the SB 823 model also contemplated that the youth who already were placed in a DJJ facility as of July 1, 2021 would finish their custody term in the state's care, and the facilities would close only after all youth had been discharged. That key element of the realignment design changed with the enactment of SB 92 in 2021, which – among other provisions – set a hard closure date for DJJ facilities on June 30, 2023. Neither that bill nor any subsequent bill provides resources to support the treatment or housing needs of the returning DJJ population.

To ensure the appropriate level of support for the youth and young adults during a period of high stress and vulnerability, we urge the Legislature to provide resources to counties in specific recognition of local responsibilities associated with providing a healing environment and facilitating needed treatment for those transitioning from the state to county care.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for a continued partnership in carrying out local initiatives. Counties remain committed first and foremost to the needs of and opportunities for success with the young people in our care.

Sincerely,



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