



March 15, 2023

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

**RE: Budget Issues 5227 – Board of State and Community Corrections (Public Defense Pilot; PRCS Funding)  
Budget Issue 0820 – Department of Justice (Bureau of Forensic Services – Crime Lab Fees)**

Dear Senator Durazo:

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 provide the broad county perspective on several budget issues that are before Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 5.

**Budget Item 5227 – Board of State and Community Corrections**

➤ **Proposed Reduction in Public Defense Pilot Program – Oppose**

Our associations are very appreciative of the Legislature's commitment to providing resources for the provision of indigent criminal defense services at the local level. Since 2021-22, the state budget has dedicated funding to support resentencing workloads in recognition of recent law changes. The Governor's proposed 2023-24 budget would eliminate the third and final year of this funding at a time when counties' efforts to fulfill the promise of the Public Defense Pilot Program are demonstrating meaningful impact. We urge the Legislature to retain the final year of funding to allow the pilot program to fulfill its promise.

➤ **Proposed Funding for Post-Release Community Supervision Funding - Support**

Counties also appreciate the continued state investment in addressing Post-Release Community Supervision caseload impacts to counties resulting from implementation of various state prison population reduction strategies, including Proposition 57 –

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the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016. CSAC, RCRC, and UCC strongly support the \$8.2 million proposed in the Governor's 2023-24 budget for this purpose.

**Budget Item 0820 – Department of Justice (DOJ)**

➤ **LAO Proposal to Levy Fees for Local Governments' Use of State Crime Labs – Oppose**

Finally, as it relates to DOJ's Bureau of Forensic Services, we would like to express our opposition to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) proposal to move to a fee-based system for state crime labs. In our view, charging counties fees for DOJ forensic lab services would place additional fiscal pressures on local governments. Counties would either be forced to cut the level of forensic services or make reductions to another county program, as they would not have the resources to cover fees associated with a vital service that for 50 years has been recognized as most appropriately supported by the state. We believe it is in the public's best interest to ensure continued access to the state's crime lab system in a manner that does not require consideration of fiscal impacts over victims' needs, public safety needs, or the imperative to support robust prosecutorial and defense efforts.

We appreciate the subcommittee's thoughtful review of the many significant fiscal and policy issues before you for consideration and action. We also appreciate your consideration of the county perspective. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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cc: Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 5  
Nora Brackbill, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Matt Osterli, Senate Republican Fiscal