

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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August 22, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: El Dorado County Oppose AB 505 (Ting) – As amended on 8/14/23

Dear Senator Portantino,

On behalf of the County of El Dorado, we wish to express our respectful opposition to AB 505, authored by Assembly Member Phil Ting. This bill seeks to introduce changes to critical provisions of SB 823, the 2020 legislation that shifted the responsibility for the highest end of the juvenile justice continuum to county governments.

While we acknowledge the recent efforts to refine AB 505, we remain concerned about several aspects of the proposed modifications that undermine the fundamental principle of linking responsibility with the authority to implement. SB 823 established a framework for the realignment of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), entrusting county governments with the responsibility for young individuals who were previously eligible for placement in DJJ facilities under state jurisdiction. AB 505 introduces provisions that could potentially hinder counties from effectively carrying out this realignment, weakening the essential connection between addressing the needs of the realigned population of youth and the authority to develop, implement, and support a locally responsive plan.

Our opposition is primarily centered around specific provisions related to the authority of boards of supervisors to make decisions regarding local expenditures (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] Section 1991), as well as changes to WIC Section 1995 concerning the subcommittee of the multiagency Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council. We find it concerning that this subcommittee, responsible for developing a plan to support and treat the youth under our care, could potentially lack the leadership and guidance of the county department head responsible for executing the realigned responsibilities. Furthermore, the revisions to WIC Section 1995 pertaining to the submission of local plans to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) and the subsequent review process introduce unnecessary ambiguity.

From a fiscal standpoint, AB 505 raises concerns about both state and local costs, including expanded inspections of local juvenile detention facilities, altered responsibilities for local planning subcommittees, and potential funding delays due to interactions between WIC Section 1995 (e) and (f). Additionally, the proposed changes to OYCR responsibilities, such as required annual site visits and extended requirements for accessing county records, are duplicative to responsibilities of other State entities, and are likely to strain county staffing and resources.

Unfortunately, El Dorado County maintains its opposition to AB 505, as we believe it has the potential to disrupt the funding stream for DJJ realignment, weaken county oversight and administrative authority, and create obstacles to effective local implementation. These proposed changes do not align with our shared objectives of providing trauma-informed, evidence-based care and treatment for youth in county custody and establishing robust, sustainable pathways to positive youth outcomes within our communities.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any inquiries.

Sincerely,

Wendy Thomas, Chair
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors



Brian Richart
El Dorado County Chief Probation Officer

cc: The Honorable Phil Ting, Member of the Assembly
Honorable Members and Consultants of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Chief Probation Officers of California