



State of California

LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

April 4, 2005

The Honorable Gloria Romero
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 313
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Executive Director

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 737
As amended March 29, 2005**

Dear Senator Romero:

The Little Hoover Commission supports your measure, SB 737 as amended March 29, 2005, relating to reorganizing the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency. The Commission's support is based on its numerous studies over the past decade on California's prison and parole systems, and its most recent report issued in February 2005, *Reconstructing Government: A Review of the Governor's Reorganization Plan Reforming California's Youth & Adult Correctional Agency*.

In each of its studies, the Commission found that the internal structure of the correctional agency contributes to its ongoing serious problems of cost overruns, inmate abuse, and parolee failure. The lack of a unified structure for prison work and education programs has diminished their effectiveness. And the long-standing practice of allowing prisons to operate independently has hindered accountability and hampered the standardization of policies.

Most recently, the Commission concluded that reorganizing the correctional agency is a critical step in addressing the myriad of problems that plague the Department of Corrections, Youth Authority and the agency's other subordinate entities. The Commission recommended the Legislature permit the Governor's reorganization plan to go into effect. The Commission also recommended that the Governor, Legislature and agency secretary pursue opportunities to further improve the correctional system through legislation, the budget process or administrative directive, particularly in the area of youth corrections.

SB 737 would codify the reforms in GRP 1 and addresses Commission recommendations to develop a distinct plan for youth corrections, including oversight, and to require Senate confirmation for top appointees.

Because SB 737 offers a vastly improved organizational structure for the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency that could position it to effectively address its most egregious problems, the Commission is taking an active support position on the measure. As the bill moves through the committee process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If you feel my presence and testimony at a hearing would be helpful, please let me know, and I will make every attempt to be available.

Sincerely,

James P. Mayer
Executive Director

c: Commissioners