



State of California

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April 29, 2010

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Executive Director

The Honorable Loni Hancock
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3092
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1091

Dear Senator Hancock:


The Little Hoover Commission supports SB 1091, the measure you have authored to enable, for a limited term, counties to receive Medi-Cal reimbursement for medical and mental health services provided to eligible youth upon entering juvenile detention facilities.

The Commission supports this measure based on findings and recommendations in its 2008 report, *Juvenile Justice Reform: Realigning Responsibilities* (July 2008). In this report, the Commission found that the state was spending half a billion dollars annually on a declining youth offender population, and despite the cost, failed to craft a successful rehabilitation program to improve public safety. The Commission recommended the state take steps to eliminate its juvenile justice operations, in part because of the high state costs associated with housing youthful offenders, and the instances it found where counties were far more efficient at providing needed services to youthful offenders.

The Commission found that a lack of stable funding often challenged counties in their ability to plan for and provide services to youthful offenders. To ensure that counties have the resources necessary to house and rehabilitate youthful offenders, the Commission urged the governor and Legislature to create a stable, dedicated funding stream for local juvenile justice programs and services. By allowing counties to access federal Medicaid dollars to provide treatment for eligible incarcerated youth, this bill could help counties leverage existing dollars and provide necessary services to youth in county facilities at no additional cost to the state.

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,


Stuart Drown
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission
Sue Vang, legislative aide, Office of Senator Loni Hancock