



State of California

# LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

Stuart Drown  
Executive Director

March 24, 2010

The Honorable Carol Liu  
Member, California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5061  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1266**

Dear Senator Liu:

The Little Hoover Commission supports SB 1266, the measure you have authored to allow the Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assign certain individuals to alternative custody, including women and primary caregivers of dependent children who are non-violent offenders and have been determined to be low risk to re-offend.

The Commission supports this measure based on findings and recommendations in its December 2004 report, *Breaking the Barriers for Women on Parole*. During its study, the Commission called on the state to reform the incarceration system and break the cycle of crime for women and their families. The Commission found most female felons were victims before they were offenders, most are single parents and most were convicted of non-violent, drug or property crimes and that the state failed to use proven, gender-specific correctional strategies to help this population. Additionally, the Commission found that the state's correctional system, that relies more on remote prisons designed to incapacitate violent offenders rather than community correctional facilities that can better reconnect paroling women to jobs, housing, emotional supports and their families, is failing to prepare women offenders for success on parole.

The Commission in 2004 urged the governor and Legislature to reform the way the state incarcerates women offenders and supervises them on parole, by developing a robust system of community correctional facilities focused on rehabilitation. The Commission recommended the state 1) revise classification procedures to improve the way the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation makes housing assignments for women offenders, 2) develop a continuum of incarceration options, 3) partner with communities to plan, develop and operate facilities focused on successful re-entry and 4) develop contracts for community correctional facilities to deliver the array of services shown to reduce recidivism.

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