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March 21, 2014

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Executive Director

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5035
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 466

Dear Senator DeSaulnier:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Senate Bill 466, the measure you have authored that would create the California Institute for Criminal Justice Policy, housed within the University of California system, to facilitate independent and nonpartisan research on issues related to criminal justice. The Commission supports this measure based on studies it has completed on California's sentencing systems.

In its 2014 report, *Sensible Sentencing for a Safer California*, the Commission found that California's sentencing policies do not reflect decades of scientific research on rehabilitating offenders, reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. For example, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that alternative sentencing for drug offenders as well as in-prison treatment, educational and vocational programs, community-based employment and job training programs have high benefit-cost ratios and a high likelihood of successful outcomes, yet these and similar findings are not reflected in California sentencing policy. The Commission recommended establishing a Criminal Justice Information Center to collect data on sentencing policies and best practices and provide recommendations on opportunities to balance correctional resources with the state's sentencing structure while maintaining or improving public safety. It further recommended housing this center in a university or nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.

The Commission stressed the need for evidence-based policies in its 2007 report, *Solving California's Corrections Crisis: Time is Running Out*. The Commission found, again, that California's corrections policy did not mirror public safety research. It found California's criminal justice system was expensive, yet the state had a 70 percent recidivism rate – a poor return on investment. The Commission called for a clearinghouse for all sentencing and offender data in order to inform data-oriented, evidence-based criminal justice policies.

SB 466 addresses the Commission's recommendations by creating the California Institute for Criminal Justice Policy that will improve public safety by facilitating the research that will delineate effective science-based criminal justice and public safety strategies, practices, legislation and systems that reduce recidivism and hold offenders accountable. For these reasons, the Commission supports this measure.

As the bill moves through the legislative process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission