



State of California

# LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

May 11, 2015

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*Executive Director*

The Honorable Roger Hernández  
Assemblymember, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 5016  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 253**

Dear Assemblymember Hernández:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Assembly Bill 253, the measure you have authored to improve oversight and transparency of the Mental Health Services Act.

In researching its 2015 report, *Promises Still to Keep: A Decade of the Mental Health Services Act*, the Commission was troubled by the difficulty in locating key information about funds generated each year by Proposition 63 and how that money is being used across the state to enhance access to mental health services and prevention-oriented practices. Additionally, the Commission found concerning the lack of data available to understand how the Mental Health Services Act has helped reduce negative outcomes associated with untreated mental illness and improve mental health and emotional well-being across the state's diverse communities.

The Commission made several recommendations aimed at improving transparency and financial accountability to the public. Among the simplest strategies, the Commission recommended the state better organize and consolidate existing financial information relating to the Mental Health Services Act online. In addition to providing easier access to financial reports, the Commission recommended other relevant mental health reports, including county cultural competence plans that describe how a county intends to reduce mental health service disparities in racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and other unserved and underserved populations should be made more accessible online. Because Assembly Bill 253 would require the Department of Health Care Services to post counties' cultural competence plans on a dedicated website, the Commission supports this measure.

In addition, over the course of its inquiry, the Commission heard from stakeholders who recommended that people who are knowledgeable about mental health disparities and committed to reducing them should be more formally engaged in local and state-level discussions about oversight and evaluation of the act. In its report, the Commission commended action taken by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (oversight commission) in October 2014 to incorporate reducing disparities in access to mental health services into its evaluation work plan and plan how to include data necessary to evaluate projects based on how they will reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Assembly Bill 253 would take a step further to ensure these perspectives are included in discussions and evaluations by adding a person knowledgeable and experienced in reducing mental health disparities to the oversight commission.

As the bill moves through the legislative process, I will be available to write 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