



COUNTY OF DEL NORTE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 14, 2019

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee State
Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: SB 433 (Monning)
Senate Committee on Appropriations Suspense File**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors respectfully writes in opposition to Senate Bill 433 which would establish new Offices of Youth Development and Diversion under the State Department of Public Health.

We appreciate your desire and mission of providing services to youth to assist them in developing prosocial networks and systems of support. The Del Norte County Probation Department has a long history of actively engaging with youth in prevention and diversion and successfully providing for diversion services to youth to keep them from entering the juvenile justice system.

Toward this end, while the goals and intent of the bill are commendable and of significant importance, we are concerned about the approach this bill takes in setting up new Offices of Youth Development and Diversion. The stated focus of these offices is duplicative to existing probation programs and county infrastructure which already administer diversion services and programs in coordination with other organizations and agencies. These existing services meet the stated goals of SB 433 as well as the needs of youth and families.

As such, there will be significant time, costs, and personnel required to set up new Offices of Youth Development and Diversion and to coordinate all the entities named in the bill. Knowing the focus is on getting resources and corresponding programs to youth, we believe the goals of the bill can be achieved by working in coordination with probation, existing community-based organizations, and other county government departments within our current local model and partnerships. We are very concerned that setting up a new county entity to also focus on diversion would be similar in nature to having two state agencies with the same mission and responsibilities thereby adding complexity to program service delivery. This may ultimately complicate getting services to youth before they slip further into the system and we do not believe would be in the best interest of the youth.

Instead, a bill that focuses on an approach to youth development and the community factors that place young children at risk is a very important area in need of additional focus. Factors such as poverty, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and hunger, among others, are important public health issues that if addressed early, can limit contact with diversion programs and the justice system.

For these reasons, we are respectfully opposed.

Sincerely,

Lori L. Cowan
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Del Norte

Cc: Honorable Bill Monning, California State Senate