



SENATOR JIM BEALL

SB 284 Keep Youth Closer to Home Act

Co-Authors: Senator Portantino & Assemblymembers Chiu, Gipson, and McCarty

ISSUE

The annual cost to the state to confine youth at the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) averages more than \$300,000 per person, yet counties contribute only \$24,000 annually per youth. Best practices show local rehabilitation is more effective; however, the current low fee incentivizes counties to send individuals to DJJ, where they are isolated from family and community-based support.

BACKGROUND

Justice involved youth are more effectively rehabilitated in small, close to home facilities, allowing for a smooth transition back into their communities. Nearly every county in California has its own secure, probation-run facility for youth, yet they operate at just 30 percent of capacity¹, and many have abundant treatment space for high-needs individuals. Much of this space was paid for by the state with \$300 million in construction financing.²

In 1961, counties began paying a flat fee of \$25 per month to house youth in a state facility. In 1996, California passed SB 681 (Hurt) which established a sliding scale fee designed to keep most youth close to home. The Legislature continued to maintain an annual fee for counties with the intent to incentivize local rehabilitation.

In 2012, SB 1021 established the \$24,000 flat fee. With the costs of local juvenile halls, camps, and ranches generally exceeding \$24,000 per year, and increasing

annually, counties have financial incentive to send youth to the state facility.

Youth sent to DJJ experience trauma of separation from family, and are often exposed to violence. They do not receive adequate educational services, vocational programs, or mental health treatment. DJJ's most recent recidivism report shows that 74 percent of youth released in FY 2011-12 were rearrested within three years of release, 54 percent were reconvicted for a new offense, and 37 percent returned to a state institution (DJJ or prison).³

There are extreme discrepancies in counties' rates of sending individuals to DJJ. Taxpayers in counties that manage much or all of their high-needs youth locally still pay to support DJJ due to other counties that rely most heavily on it.

THIS BILL

In order to reduce county reliance on DJJ and increase local juvenile justice innovation, SB 284 creates an incentive to keep youth closer to home by:

- (1) Increasing the cost of county confinement to DJJ from \$24,000 to \$125,000 for youth who meet either of the descriptions below:**
 - a. Committed for an offense that occurred when under 16 years of age, or
 - b. Committed for an offense that would carry a sentence of fewer than 7 years in criminal court had they been tried as an adult.
- (2) Maintain a fee of \$24,000 per youth per year for cases most at risk of transfer to adult court:**
 - a. Committed for an offense that occurred when they were 16 or 17 years old, and

¹ <http://app.bscc.ca.gov/joq/jds/queryselection.asp>

² http://www.bscc.ca.gov/m_construction.php, p. 81

³ https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Juvenile_Justice/docs/2016-Division-of-Juvenile-Justice-Outcome-Evaluation-Report-2-21-2017.pdf, p. 2

- b. Committed for an offense that would carry a sentence of 7 or more years in criminal court had they been tried as an adult.

SUPPORT

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (Sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tania Natalie Dikho
Office of Senator Jim Beall
(916) 651-4015
Tania.Dikho@sen.ca.gov

