

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier District 2
Jeff Flores District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez District 5



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Arreguín
Chairman, Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1157 (Archuleta), Secure youth treatment facilities – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Arreguín,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our support for SB 1157 (Archuleta), which would close critical gaps created by the closure of the state youth facilities. Specifically, SB 1157 authorizes county probation departments to refer youth in a county Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) to the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) for specialized care and establishes a safety framework for specified Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs).

SB 823 (2020) realigned the entirety of California's juvenile justice system to counties. Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTFs) and Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs) were established as part of Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) closure and associated transfer of supervisory and detention authority of DJJ youth and DJJ qualifying youth to counties.

SB 1157 provides similar tools to counties that DJJ previously had for addressing high level mental health referrals to the Department of State Hospitals. While this population is relatively small, the impact to the youth and our facilities is enormous when a youth is in crisis.

This statutory authority is necessary as, while infrequent, there are instances where a youth's behavioral health needs are so significant as to require treatment beyond the scope of what is available in juvenile detention facilities, and which may only be adequately and appropriately provided in a locked behavioral health facility.

Additionally, LRPs are a new statutory creation as part of the DJJ closure and shift of responsibility to counties. While a youth may be stepped down into an LRP, the jurisdiction remains with probation as this is part of the court ordered detention baseline term within the Welfare and Institutions Code Section 875 continuum. As youth progress through their programming and they meet substantial progress, the court may order a less restrictive program that may be in a community setting.

Despite the establishment of LRPs as an option for courts to consider upon progress of a youth, statute does not establish a framework when the program is for a residential setting when that setting is not otherwise governed or regulated by a government or public entity. Because these programs are part of the term of secure detention, and not a part of post jurisdiction or release, it's critical that there is a framework in place to set programming expectations, safety considerations, and liability concerns for programs serving the highest risk and highest need youth and young adults in the state.

Without these most basic criteria, counties, courts, and other stakeholders may not have the confidence necessary to utilize this tool. SB 1157 simply requires the court to determine that specified LRP operators adhere to the young person's case plan and accountability measures, provide training to their staff and perform staff background checks, obtain appropriate insurance, have provided notice to the city and county in which it operates, and meet state and local zoning and land use requirements.

These criteria are necessary as LRPs are serving individuals who are the highest need and who have committed the most serious offenses within the juvenile justice system and, in the instances outlined in SB 1157, have been permitted by the court to serve the remainder of their baseline term in the community.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support SB 1157 to resolve unaddressed issues resulting from the enactment of the closure of the DJJ and to ensure that mental health services and programmatic frameworks are in place to best serve these youth and young adults and the safety of the community, and we strongly encourage your committee to **vote YES** on the bill.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Honorable Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Kern County Probation Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange