

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 5, 2026

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1203 (Smallwood-Cuevas), Private security training mandates - OPPOSE

Dear Senator Cervantes,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong opposition to SB 1203 (Smallwood-Cuevas), which would impose substantial new mandates on private security firms and the public agencies that rely on them. Kern County contracts with outside security guard companies to protect numerous county facilities including health centers, libraries, parks, administrative buildings, and justice-related offices. The requirements in SB 1203 would significantly increase the cost and complexity of providing this essential public safety function.

Specifically, SB 1203 increases required security officer training hours, mandates in-person instruction, adds new bias-related and de-escalation coursework, and requires ongoing paid training each year. Although well-intended, these mandates dramatically raise operational and labor costs for contracted security providers. By imposing state-controlled labor and training requirements on private security firms, the resulting higher contract rates would be passed directly to counties, adding new financial burdens at a time when Kern County already faces persistent fiscal pressures and must stretch limited resources across an expansive region.

The bill also imposes administrative fines of up to \$10,000 per violation, heightened reporting obligations after altercations or firearm-related incidents, and expanded record-keeping requirements. These changes create substantial compliance risk for private security partners and add administrative burdens for county departments that coordinate and oversee these contracts. SB 1203 effectively becomes an unfunded mandate on counties that depend on outside security services to ensure public safety at government buildings.

We agree that security training and accountability are important. However, the extensive new costs, rigid training requirements, and significant administrative penalties in SB 1203 will reduce flexibility, strain public budgets, and may even discourage firms from bidding on public security contracts, particularly in rural counties like ours.

Furthermore, SB 1203 reflects the State's ongoing pattern of inserting itself into local labor structures in ways that consistently advantage unionized public-sector workforces at the expense of local flexibility. Just as we have seen in the IHSS program, where the State has repeatedly intervened in local bargaining and positioned counties to absorb the financial consequences, SB 1203 appears to advance similar goals by imposing burdensome, state-crafted standards on private security firms. These increasingly rigid and costly mandates risk making contracted security services financially impractical, effectively steering counties toward public-sector staffing models and weakening our ability to choose the most efficient and cost-effective method of providing security at county facilities.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors is strongly opposed to this measure and urges your committee to vote **NO on SB 1203**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Human Resources Division
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange