



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## Use Your Voice

MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0019

### **Re: Support for A.B. 2417, The Youth Bill of Rights**

DEAR ASSEMBLY MEMBER TING,

This letter is written in support of A.B. 2417, which would ensure that California youth who are incarcerated know their rights and are informed of the newly-established state ombudsperson office. This is needed because the state recently enacted SB 823, which will close the state Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in 2023 and shift the responsibility for incarceration to counties. When DJJ closes, the existing youth Bill of Rights will no longer be effective. As California transforms its youth justice system to handle youth at the county level, it is important to assure that young people understand the rights and protections they have when they are held in local custody.

Youth Leadership Institute Black, Brown, and Indigenous young people – our youth – bear the brunt of our state’s harmful youth “justice” system. While we work towards dismantling these systems, we want to make sure that youth who are currently incarcerated are knowledgeable about their rights.

Assembly Bill 2417 will help young people to better understand their rights. It is written in language they can understand instead of using difficult legal terms. It will require the rights be posted in facilities and given to youth when they enter. Youth in foster care have long had a bill of rights (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 16001.9), and those in the Division of Juvenile Justice have had a bill of rights since 2007 (Welf. & Inst. Code, §224.71). This bill will assure that youth in county facilities such as juvenile halls and camps have a similar statement of rights.

While A.B. 2417 mainly tracks the rights and protections already in law for youth in the Division of Juvenile Justice, it has also been shared in draft form with at least 6 groups of young people with systems experience. They have helped to update terminology and made small but important suggestions for change. Because of this, A.B. 2417 truly represents what young people believe is important for others in their position to know about legal rights and protections.

This is a much-needed measure that will have an immediate impact in helping young people to believe that the law supports and protects them. If they should have problems in facilities, it will help them to voice their concerns and seek assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA BARAHONA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Youth Leadership Institute  
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