



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 25th, 2024

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
California State Capitol
1021 O. St., 5521
Sacramento, CA 94249

**RE: Assembly Bill 2833 (McKinnor), Restorative Justice Integrity Act –
(SUPPORT)**

Dear Assemblymember McKinnor:

On behalf of Youth Leadership Institute, I am writing in **strong support** of **Assembly Bill (AB) 2833**, which will protect the integrity of Restorative Justice processes by providing comprehensive admissibility protections for statements made in the course of Restorative Justice processes. AB 2833 will encourage broader participation in Restorative Justice dialogues.

yli partners with thousands of youth across the state, the majority of whom are low-income youth of color. Many of these young people have had profoundly impacted by systems of oppression. They would benefit greatly from a culturally competent justice system that centered their experiences and voices, and sought true repair and healing, rather than punishment.

Survivors and victims of harm often do not feel their needs are met, or that they have a meaningful opportunity to be heard, in traditional criminal and juvenile legal processes. Only 14% of California survivors surveyed in 2019 reported feeling “very supported” by the criminal legal system after their experience of harm.¹ Restorative Justice is a model that centers the needs of people who have been harmed and is rooted in indigenous practices. It is a community-based, non-punitive process that provides victims/survivors and their loved ones the opportunity to ask questions, share about the impact of

¹ CALIFORNIANS FOR SAFETY & JUST., CALIFORNIANS FOR SAFETY & JUST., CALIFORNIA CRIME SURVIVORS SPEAK: A STATEWIDE SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA VICTIMS’ VIEWS ON SAFETY AND JUSTICE 2 (2019).

harm, and engage in dialogue with the person who caused them harm. Restorative Justice processes have resulted in higher rates of satisfaction for victims and survivors than going through the criminal legal system.² Victims and survivors have also reported reduced feelings of fear, anger, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and depression after going through a Restorative Justice process.³

Restorative Justice programs are effective tools for addressing conflict and harm within communities, an impact recognized this January 2024 in the results of a randomized control trial of San Francisco's Make It Right program featured in peer-reviewed *Econometrica*.⁴ However, as noted in a recent R Street Institute policy paper⁵, the ability for participants to speak freely without fear of repercussion is essential for the success of these processes. Currently, the absence of clear legal protections leaves individuals hesitant to engage fully in Restorative Justice, undermining its potential for healing and restoration.

AB 2833 aims to remedy this situation by establishing comprehensive protections for all Restorative Justice processes in California to ensure that information shared in Restorative Justice processes is inadmissible in future legal proceedings.

For these reasons, we **support AB 2833**. Please contact me at pbarahona@yli.org for any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

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

PATRICIA BARAHONA

² SUJATHA BALIGA ET AL., IMPACT JUST., RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY CONFERENCING: A STUDY OF COMMUNITY WORKS WEST'S RESTORATIVE JUSTICE YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAM IN ALAMEDA COUNTY 3 (2017).

³ *Id.* at 3-4.

⁴ *Can Restorative Justice Conferencing Reduce Recidivism? Evidence From the Make-it-Right Program.* (2024, January). California Policy Lab. <https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Can-Restorative-Justice-Conferencing-Reduce-Recidivism-Evidence-from-the-Make-it-Right-Program-1.pdf>

⁵ Seacrest, L. (2023, September). *Justice for All: How Restorative Justice Mutually Benefits Victims and Youth.* R Street Institute.

<https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Final-Study-No.-294.pdf>

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Youth Leadership Institute

CC: Assemblymember Ash Kalra, Chair of the Assembly Judiciary Committee
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, Chair of the Assembly Public Safety
Committee