



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

June 25th, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Legislative Office Building
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1057 (Menjivar), The Youth Justice Equity in Representation Act —
SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember McCarty,

Youth Leadership Institute is pleased to support SB 1057 (Menjivar), which would help California fully realize the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act's vision of providing healing-centered, culturally competent, and community-based approaches for at-risk youth and youth involved in the juvenile court system by ensuring equitable community representation and improved decision-making within county Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils (JJCCs).

YLI partners with thousands of youth across the state, the majority of whom are low-income youth of color. We have witnessed first hand the brutal impacts of our state's harmful "justice" system on their lives, and the lives of their families.

In 2000, the Schiff-Cárdenas Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act was created to support youth in their communities and limit their involvement in the justice system. The grant requires that each county establish a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council that consists of representatives from a variety of local agencies and community groups to ensure the county's multi-agency juvenile justice plan is collaborative and comprehensive.

However, in 2020, the [California State Auditor released a report](#) which found that most counties left mandatory stakeholder seats vacant. In fact, 20 percent of counties lacked a Council entirely during the audit review period.

Of those counties that did complete plans, the State Auditor found that counties generally made limited revisions to their plans over the past 20 years although [youth arrests in California](#) have declined by 89 percent from 243,090 in 2000 to 26,000 in 2022. The state has also seen a 91 percent decline in referrals to probation since 2006, from 187,296 in 2006 to 16,252 in 2022.

Across the state, inequitable decision-making by JJCCs has continued in the years since the Auditor's report. The Riverside County JJCC was required to add five community member seats following a 2020 settlement centered on the county's Youth Accountability Team (YAT) program. [The lawsuit](#) argued that the YAT program spent millions of dollars funneling children into an unconstitutional probation system that denied them their due process rights and subjected them to oppressive, invasive policies, such as surprise searches, unannounced home visitations, strict restrictions on who participants could speak to, curfews, and interrogations into intimate details of their lives. In 2021 and 2022, [Fresno](#) and [Sacramento](#) Counties were both found to be unlawfully holding meetings on juvenile justice reform behind closed doors. Dismal reporting has continued, allowing for incidents such as in Los Angeles County, where probation was found to have spent [nearly \\$400 thousand yearly on a youth diversion program that served zero youth participants](#) while simultaneously [hoarding almost \\$100 million in JJCPA funding](#), thus preventing the delivery of much-needed resources to parks and recreation, arts, education, and behavioral health oriented youth programming.

SB 1057 will advance the health-first approach to youth justice envisioned in California's Juvenile Justice Realignment Plan, ensure equitable community representation and improved transparency and decision-making, and promote positive youth development for California's most vulnerable youth. Specifically, this bill will:

- Ensure 50% community representation on county Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils (JJCCs).
- Require a community representative to serve as a co-chair on the JJCC (as elected by their council colleagues) alongside the chief probation officer, who shall serve as the other co-chair.

- Allow counties greater flexibility in the size of their JJCCs as well as more choice in which county agency representatives are appointed to their JJCCs.
- Require JJCCs to meet no less than three times a year and make meetings accessible to the public through meeting times that optimize and encourage public participation and remote participation.
- Require that juvenile justice plans provide an effective continuum of care for at-risk youth, youth involved in the juvenile court system, and their families.

We invite you to join us in realizing a new vision for California's young people – one that recognizes that collaborative decision making and investments in health, education, and community-based services are essential in preventing youths' exposure to violence and involvement in the justice system.

For these reasons, Youth Leadership Institute strongly supports SB 1057 and respectfully requests your AYE vote.

Sincerely,

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

PATRICIA BARAHONA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Youth Leadership Institute

CC:

Assemblymember Juan Alanis, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Tom Lackey
Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen
Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes
Assemblymember Philip Ting
Assemblymember Lori Wilson
Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur