



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

April 21st, 2025

The Honorable Jesse Arreguín
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 311 (Grove) – OPPOSE

Dear Chair Arreguín,

On behalf of **Youth Leadership Institute**, I write in strong opposition to SB 311, authored by Senator Grove, which would deny some incarcerated transgender, gender-diverse, and intersex (TGI) people the ability to access housing that aligns with their gender identity. Specifically, it would deny transgender women convicted of specified offenses from being housed at women's prisons and require CDCR to establish a facility at each women's prison to house transgender women separate from cis women. This proposal is part of the nationwide wave of attacks against transgender people, and California must firmly reject it.

yli partners with thousands of youth across the state, many of whom identify as queer, low-income and youth of color. We witness first hand the brutal impacts of our state's harmful "justice" system on their lives, and are staunchly opposed to policies that erase our trans community and further harm and put at risk our incarcerated loved ones.

CDCR has a demonstrated record of failing to protect the most vulnerable people in its custody. Transgender women housed in CDCR facilities for men face extreme amounts of physical and sexual violence, routine harassment and humiliation, and forced isolation. Researchers have consistently found that transgender women housed in facilities for men, in California and nationwide, are sexually assaulted with horrifying frequency.¹

¹ See Valerie Jenness et al., "Transgender Inmates in California's Prisons: An Empirical Study of a Vulnerable Population" (Apr. 2009) available at <https://ucicorrections.seweb.uci.edu/files/2013/06/Transgender-Inmates-in-CAs-Prisons-An-Empirical-Study-of-a-Vulnerable-Population.pdf> (finding that in California state prisons designated

This pattern of violence and abuse toward transgender people was the impetus for Senator Wiener’s SB 132 (the Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act), which the Legislature passed and Governor Newsom signed into California law in 2020. SB 132 gave incarcerated transgender people the agency to identify whether they would feel safer in a men’s or women’s facility, and paved the way for people to be housed in accordance with their gender identity. By passing SB 132, the Legislature recognized the harms that TGI people experience in prison and required CDCR to adjust its housing policy and other practices to reduce those harms. SB 132 should be strengthened and fully implemented — not repealed or weakened.

To date, CDCR has failed to meaningfully enact the bill’s measures, especially in recent years. In 2021, CDCR approved 43 transfer requests from TGI people who said they would feel safer in a women’s-designated prison, and denied 9. But from January 2022 through 2024, CDCR approved just 3 requests from TGI people, while denying 79.

CDCR is responsible for protecting everyone in its custody—regardless of their gender, regardless of the facility in which they are housed, and regardless of their conviction history. SB 311 denies housing options to transgender people based solely on their gender and conviction histories, and, as such, is discriminatory and should be rejected. By preventing a transgender woman, but not a cisgender woman, from being housed in a facility designated for women because of the crimes for which she was convicted is discrimination.

Involuntary, separate facilities for transgender women will not increase safety inside prisons for anyone. People of all genders in CDCR custody can be sexually abused, and it is often staff who are the perpetrators. In fact, in a recent study, one in five people reported they were sexually assaulted in prison, with nearly half (45%) reporting that they were sexually assaulted by prison staff.² Sexual violence at the hands of CDCR staff will not decrease in a segregated facility.

for men the rate of sexual assault was 13 times more prevalent among transgender women, with 59% reporting being sexually assaulted while in a California correctional facility); Human Impact Partners, “[From Crisis to Care: Ending the Health Harm of Women’s Prisons.](#)” Oakland, CA: February 2023; Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12: Supplemental Tables: Prevalence of Sexual Victimization Among Transgender Adult Inmates* (Dec. 2014), available at https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112_st.pdf.

² Human Impact Partners. “[From Crisis to Care: Ending the Health Harm of Women’s Prisons.](#)” Oakland, CA: February 2023.

For these reasons, **Youth Leadership Institute** strongly opposes SB 311 (Grove).

Sincerely,



PATRICIA BARAHONA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Youth Leadership Institute

¹ See Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). (2020). Registration and community notification of children and adolescents adjudicated of a sexual crime: Recommendations for evidence-based reform, p. 3.

<https://members.atsa.com/ap/CloudFile/Download/p5eBkN0p>.

² See official website for the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/moore-center-for-the-prevention-of-child-sexual-abuse/news-and-media/headlines>

³ See California Sex Offender Management Board. (2019). Juvenile Recommendations, p. 19.

https://casomb.org/pdf/CASOMB_Juvenile_Recommendations_January_2019.pdf.

⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁵ See, for example, Elizabeth Letourneau & Kevin Armstrong. (2008). *Recidivism Rates for Registered and Nonregistered Juvenile Sexual Offenders*. ("Results generally failed to support the effectiveness of [U.S. registration policy], operationalized as reduced recidivism by juvenile sexual offenders.")

⁶ See, for example, Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Dipankar Bandyopadhyay, Kevin S. Armstrong & Debajyoti Sinha, *Do Sex Offender Registration and Notification Requirements Deter Juvenile Sex Crimes?*, 37 CRIM. JUST. & BEHAV. 553, 564 (2010) (" This is the first study to address the question, Do SORN requirements deter juvenile sex crimes? The answer is, in a word, no.")

⁷ See Franklin E. Zimring, Wesley G. Jennings, Alex R. Piquero & Stephanie Hays, *Investigating the Continuity of Sex Offending: Evidence from the Second Philadelphia Birth Cohort*, 26 JUST. Q. 58, 71 (2009).

⁸ See, for example, Michael F. Caldwell, *Quantifying the Decline in Juvenile Sexual Recidivism Rates*, 22 PSYCH. PUB. POL'Y & L. 414, 419 (2016) ("The 33 studies conducted over the past 15 years reported a mean sexual recidivism rate of 2.75%. This suggests that the most current sexual recidivism rate is likely to be below 3%.")

⁹ See, for example, Note 7, p 58.

¹⁰ See Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Andrew J. Harris, Ryan T. Shield, Scott M. Wakefield, Amanda E. Ruzicka, Cierra Buckman, Geoffrey D. Khan & Reshmi Nair, *Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being: An Empirical Examination*, 24 PSYCH. PUB. POL'Y & L. 105, 114 (2018).