



PREVENTING VIOLENCE
AND DEVELOPING
YOUTH LEADERS

September 8, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to SB 1004 (Hill)

Dear Governor Brown:

Youth ALIVE! strongly opposes Senate Bill 1004 (Hill), a bill that will require courts in Alameda, Butte, Napa, Nevada, and Santa Clara counties to place eligible young adults in juvenile hall for up to one year.

Youth ALIVE! is a violence prevention and intervention organization that helps young people become leaders and advocates for the change they would like to see in their communities through our Teens on Target Program, mentors and supports healing for young people who have been violently injured through our Caught in the Crossfire program, and works with families grieving in the wake of a homicide through our Khadafy Washington Project. Our goal is to help people find a brighter future and SB 1004 makes our goal more challenging.

SB 1004 will allow adults under 21 to enter a guilty plea in exchange for entry into an untested pilot program. Youth found eligible for the SB 1004 pilot must plead guilty to a felony offense and waive their right to a speedy trial in order to qualify for a period of detention in juvenile hall. If, at any time, the county probation and courts determine that a young person is not benefitting from the program, they may revoke eligibility, saddling them with a lifelong felony conviction.

Currently, youth facilities across the state are operating far below capacity because of steep and continued declines in youth arrest; an indication of California's progress towards sensible alternatives to incarceration. SB 1004, however, aims to fill these vacant beds with young people who could otherwise be served in the community.

SB 1004 restricts program participation to those charged with a non-serious and non-violent offense, youth and young adults best served in their communities. Community-based services are preferable to incarceration because they allow young people to remain nearer to social supports and opportunities for education and employment.

SB 1004 places youth in Alameda, Butte, Napa, Nevada, and Santa Clara counties at risk of unnecessary confinement and sets a problematic precedent for the use of juvenile halls in California. For these reasons, we strongly oppose SB 1004 and respectfully request your veto.

Sincerely,

Anne Marks
Executive Director

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