



PREVENTING VIOLENCE  
AND DEVELOPING  
YOUTH LEADERS

March 6, 2017

Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Public Safety Committee  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5064  
Sacramento, CA 95814

YOUTH ALIVE!  
3300 Elm Street  
Oakland, CA 94609  
Tel: (510) 594-2588  
Fax: (510) 594-0667  
mail@youthalive.org  
www.youthalive.org

**HONORARY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA  
Former Mayor of Los Angeles

DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
United States Senator

EDWARD JAMES OLMOS  
Actor

AL JARREAU  
Singer/Musician

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PHILLIP S. CHANG  
Principal  
Redondo Surgical  
Los Angeles, CA

ALISA DEWYS  
Consultant  
Resources Global Professionals  
San Francisco, CA

DAVID E. DURANT, ESQ.  
General Counsel  
Yapstone  
Walnut Creek, CA

ANGELA JENKINS  
Director  
Northern California Community  
Benefit Funded Programs  
Kaiser Permanente  
Oakland, CA

CAITLIN LANG  
Principal & Owner  
Liquid Form Design  
Oakland, CA

MICHAEL NIETO  
Deputy District Attorney  
Alameda County  
District Attorney's Office  
Oakland, CA

ELIZABETH SEKERA  
Lead HEDIS RN  
San Francisco Health Plan  
San Francisco, CA

NANCY SKINNER  
Former State Assembly Member  
Berkeley, CA

SIARA SPRIGGS  
Claims Authorizer  
Social Security Administration  
Richmond, CA

LA'BAN WADE II  
Former Youth Leader  
Teens on Target  
Oakland, CA

STAN WEISNER, PH.D., MSW  
Director  
Behavioral & Biological Sciences  
UC Berkeley Extension  
Berkeley, CA

ANNE C. MARKS  
Executive Director  
Youth ALIVE!  
Oakland, CA

**RE: Support for SB 190 (Mitchell, Lara) – Ending Juvenile Administrative Fees**

Dear Chairperson Skinner:

Youth ALIVE!, supports Senate Bill 190 (Mitchell, Lara), which will end the harmful assessment and collection of administrative fees against the families of youth in the juvenile justice system. We are grateful for your co-authorship, and we urge you to do all you can to ensure that this bill passes.

State law permits counties to charge families with youth in the juvenile justice system fees for legal representation, detention, and probation conditions. Counties determine the type and amount of these administrative fees, up to a state maximum. Although a handful of large counties have recently discontinued the practice, most California counties still assess and collect fees related to detention, probation supervision, electronic monitoring, drug testing, pre-trial/probation investigation, and even representation by a public defender.

Research conducted by the Policy Advocacy Clinic at the U.C., Berkeley, School of Law has shown that juvenile fees have a regressive and racially disparate impact on Californians. Most youth in the juvenile system come from low-income families that should qualify for fee reductions or waivers based on inability to pay, but jurisdictions often pursue collection indiscriminately. Some counties pursue juvenile fees from families whose children are later found not guilty, and some pursue fees from families even after the debt pushes them into bankruptcy.

Because Black and Latino youth are discriminated against throughout the juvenile justice process, fees are imposed disproportionately on families of color. For example, compared to their White counterparts, youth of color experience harsher treatment by the juvenile justice system. They are referred to juvenile probation at disproportionate rates, detained more often and for longer periods of time, and sentenced to longer probations terms, which translate directly into fee assessments. As a result, families of color—families that are already more likely to be living in poverty—bear a much higher fee burden than White families.

The primary goal of the juvenile justice system is to promote rehabilitation and facilitate family reunification. As the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, the New York Times, and juvenile justice experts across the country have noted, juvenile administrative fees do not serve any of the stated purposes of the juvenile justice system. These fees are not meant to punish youth or reimburse victims. By statute, juvenile administrative fees are intended solely to help counties recoup costs related to providing care and supervision to youth. Yet, most counties net little

to no net financial gain from these fees because they are costly to collect and most families cannot afford to pay them. Moreover, recent research suggests that such fees actually increase youth recidivism.

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 on probation and/or 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. We know how oppressive administrative fees can be and how they can prevent a young people and their families from being able to move forward in a positive way with their lives.

Youth ALIVE! supports SB 190 and reiterates our appreciation of your co-authorship of the bill. We respectfully request that you continue to do all you can to support the bill's passage.

Sincerely,



Anne Marks  
Executive Director

CC: Honorable Holly J. Mitchell, California State Senate (Principal Co-Author)  
Honorable Ricardo Lara, California State Senate (Principal Co-Author)