



PREVENTING VIOLENCE
AND DEVELOPING
YOUTH LEADERS

July 24, 2015

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

YOUTH ALIVE!
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RE: Request for Signature of Senate Bill 411 (Lara) – Right to Record

Dear Governor Brown:

Youth ALIVE! respectfully urges your signature on SB 411 (Lara), which clarifies that video recording, audio recording, and/or photographing law enforcement is not a crime.

Youth ALIVE! supports SB 411’s effort to increase public transparency and accountability. In several California cases and beyond, bystanders have been arrested while recording or photographing police in public places. Recently, in South Gate, a woman recording law enforcement activity in her neighborhood was aggressively approached by officers who broke her device. Other videos and reports have surfaced online of civilians being arrested for recording officers in the cities of Los Angeles, Torrance, and San Diego, as well as the County of Orange.

Existing California law prohibits the obstruction of an officer, but it does not provide clear language that recording officers in public places does not fall under the parameters of obstructing an officer. The vagueness of the law necessitates a clarification to give all citizens and law enforcement officers a clear understanding that individuals have a right to record.

SB 411 clarifies individuals’ First Amendment right to record police officers by providing that:

- a civilian who takes a photograph or makes an audio or video recording of a public officer while the officer is in a public place or the person taking the photograph or making the recording is in a place he or she has the right to be, is not violating the law;
- recording does not constitute reasonable suspicion to detain the person or probable cause to arrest.

Thank you for your consideration and for these reasons Youth ALIVE! respectfully urges your signature on SB 411. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our organization at 510.594.2588.

Sincerely,

Anne Marks
Executive Director

cc: State Senator Ricardo Lara staff: Shamoiya.washington@sen.ca.gov

Youth ALIVE is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Our Tax ID is 94-3143254.

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