



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** Probation

**Subject:** Letter Opposing Senate Bill 357

**Meeting Date:** April 8, 2025

**Formal Title:** Direct the Board Chair to send a letter opposing Senate Bill 357, concerning Juvenile Probation and Juvenile Hall, to Senator Menjivar and all members and consultants of the Senate Committee on Public Safety

### **Recommended Actions**

Direct the Board Chair to send a letter opposing Senate Bill (SB) 357, which would allow the Board to appoint another County department with all the duties and responsibilities of Juvenile Probation and Juvenile Hall, to Senator Menjivar and all members and consultants of the Senate Committee on Public Safety.

### **Executive Summary**

Probation is requesting the Chair of the Board to send a letter opposing the passage of SB 357 to the California State Legislature. If enacted, SB 357 would authorize the County Board of Supervisors to appoint another County department to assume all duties and authorities concerning minors that are statutory responsibilities currently assigned to Juvenile Probation. The passage of this bill would effectively remove critical public safety responsibilities from the County Probation Department, shifting essential functions to another County department that is not part of the public safety system.

### **Discussion**

SB 357 seeks to authorize the Board of Supervisors to assign to another County department the duties and statutory responsibilities related to young people that are currently vested in the Probation Department or probation officers.

County Probation plays a critical role in the juvenile justice system, serving both juveniles (12-17) and young adults (18-24) adjudicated for offenses ranging from minor misdemeanors to serious and violent felonies. The success of the juvenile system relies heavily on the expertise, oversight, and responsibilities carried out by trained Probation staff.

By overseeing the entire continuum of services, Probation is uniquely positioned to recognize and address the importance of working with youth in prevention, intervention, and diversion efforts. This comprehensive approach, based on training, evidence-based practices, equitable, and culturally responsive programming, enables Probation to prioritize early interventions that keep youth safely supported within their communities, reserving detention for those youth who pose a public safety risk. When detention is necessary, decisions are made by highly trained professionals with expertise in both rehabilitation and public safety. Probation serves youth, families, the community, the County, and ultimately the Court to balance the need for secure housing while developing individualized rehabilitation plans that support each youth's growth and success.

The proposed legislation would fundamentally alter the structure of Probation services, impacting many areas. Currently, Probation is responsible for managing juvenile halls

and camps that house youth for their offenses. Removing these responsibilities from a trained, professional probation workforce risk compromising both public safety and the continuum of services designed to support rehabilitation.

These changes also raise concerns about impacts on community safety, coordination with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other County departments, training requirements, and the local implementation of state policies governing the juvenile justice system. These are currently the responsibilities of Probation. Shifting these responsibilities would disrupt the local service continuum and negatively impact on the ability to balance safety and treatment for youth. Additionally, appointing another County department accountable solely to the Board of Supervisors would eliminate the requirement for collaboration with community partners, CBOs, families impacted by the justice system, and the courts. Probation has cultivated these relationships, recognizing their essential role in supporting clients and reducing recidivism.

For these reasons, Probation strongly recommends that the Board of Supervisors formally oppose SB 357 and communicate this opposition to State legislators and key stakeholders.

**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact from the recommended action.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Equity Framework - Leadership, Operations & Services

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

**Submitted By:**

Fernando Giraldo, Chief Probation Officer

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.