AB 915: JONES-SAWYER
Youth Community Incentives Act
(version dated 4.22.13)

Summary

AB 915 will allocate 75% of future savings from the state's shrinking youth correctional facilities directly to counties in the form of a Youthful Offender Block Grant Part B, for the purpose of serving high-needs youth offenders locally.

This legislation does not prohibit counties from committing new youth offenders to the state's Division of Juvenile Facilities (DJF); but rather creates a new funding stream for those counties who are currently opting to supervise DJF-eligible youth locally, and those who would do so in the future.

Background

As of December 2012, the DJF youth population was below 800 youth, down from a peak of 10,000 in 1996, at a cost to the state of over $200 million annually. Counties are consistently serving a higher number of DJF-eligible youth offenders locally each month, sending 60% fewer youth offenders to DJF over the last two years, yet are doing so without any additional state resources or accountability. The state has saved $75 million from the system in the last two years, but those savings have not been returned to counties for capacity building, even as the state has imposed a new $24,000 fee for each new DJF commitment.

Counties are uniquely positioned to deliver successful interventions for high-need and high-risk youth offenders by adapting and enhancing existing programmatic and physical resources, according to a 2012 report by the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ). Local jurisdictions are well situated to develop or enhance partnerships with community-based service providers, and can maximize available funding streams for juvenile justice populations that cannot be utilized in custodial settings. They are able to deliver individualized treatment through case management, mental health services, alcohol and drug counseling, and reentry supports, with gender responsive, culturally competent, and trauma-informed care.

Existing Law

Welfare & Institutions Section 1950 establishes the Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) to enhance the capacity of county probation, mental health, drug and alcohol, and other departments to provide appropriate rehabilitative and supervision services to specified youthful offenders.

This Bill

1. Creates the Youthful Offender Block Grant Part B.

2. Upon appropriation allocates 75% of the state's future savings from decreased admissions to DJF, and any system-wide cost reductions, to the Youth Offender Block Grant Part B.

3. The savings will be redirected to the counties based on the formula below.

   - 30% of total cost savings are allocated to a block grant available to all counties for best practice supervision and rehabilitation models.

   - 30% of total cost savings are allocated directly to those counties with net decreases in new admissions based on their FY 2012-13 baseline new commitments.

   - 15% of total cost savings are allocated to a technical assistance fund to support counties for the ongoing implementation of model practices for serving DJF-eligible offenders.

4. Expands oversight and reporting mechanisms to include DJF-eligible youth served locally by counties, who were not included in Senate Bill 81.

5. This bill is in conjunction with a budget act which will appropriate the savings from the general fund to the Youthful Offender Block Grant Part B.

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Support

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (Co-Sponsor)
Communities United for Restorative Justice (Co-Sponsor)
Board of Supervisors- City and County of San Francisco London Reed
California Attorneys for Criminal Justice
California Catholic Conference Inc.
Children's Defense Fund
Community Coalition
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Haywood W. Burns Institute
Justice For Families
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
National Center for Youth Law
Policy Link
Prison Law Office
Public Counsel
Service Employees International Union State Council6
Youth Law Center
(2) Individuals

Opposition

None in opposition as of April 22, 2013

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