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California State Senate

SENATOR
MARÍA ELENA DURAZO
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT



CHAIR:
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
NO. 5 ON PUBLIC
SAFETY, JUDICIARY,
TRANSPORTATION & LABOR
LATINO CAUCUS
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BANKING & FINANCIAL
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JUDICIARY
LABOR, PUBLIC
EMPLOYMENT & RETIREMENT

February 1, 2021

Chair Linda Penner
California Board of State and Community Corrections
2590 Venture Oaks Way
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Chair Penner:

Earlier this year, I co-authored legislation aimed at ending practices that forced families with youth involved in the juvenile legal system to pay fees they could not afford. Effective January 1, 2021, SB 1290 will protect California youth and their families from harmful, regressive, and racially discriminatory administrative fees by requiring the discharge of all fees previously imposed by the juvenile legal system.

I was disappointed to learn that counties continue to impose fees for phone calls, visitor parking, and other items. Many of these fees are not articulated in statute, only in regulation, and with broad discretion given to juvenile facilities on how to develop and implement such policies.¹

These fees disproportionately harm low-income families and families of color, and they are particularly concerning given the public health and economic crisis due to COVID-19. They are also contrary to the intent of SB 1290 to eliminate harmful cost-shifting that burdens families and frustrates the goals of the juvenile legal system.

I respectfully request that your Board act in the spirit of debt-free justice and take any action within your purview to work with the relevant county actors to end all fees that youth and their families might face from contact with the juvenile legal system.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jack Raineri in our office at jack.raineri@sen.ca.gov. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Elena Durazo".

Senator Maria Elena Durazo, 24th District

¹ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 15 § 1376.