



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
Celebrating 31 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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April 20, 2016

TO: Supervisor Hilda Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
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FROM: Dr. Sunny Kang, Chair 
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

RE: SENATE BILL 1143, ROOM CONFINEMENT IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

On behalf of the Commission for Children and Families, I respectfully urge the Board of Supervisors (Board) to support Senate Bill (SB) 1143 by Senator Mark Leno, a bill that would set workable and humane standards to limit the use of room confinement of youth in California's juvenile facilities.

SB 1143 will set nationally recognized best standards into law regarding the use of room confinement in juvenile facilities. This bill is in keeping with efforts in several other states to limit the use of room confinement in favor of less restrictive options that have demonstrated greater success in promoting facility safety and improved youth outcomes.

Specifically, SB 1143, would bring these urgently needed reforms:

- Define room confinement as the placement of a youth in a locked sleep room or cell alone with minimal or no contact with persons other than correctional staff or attorneys. It does not include brief periods of confinement necessary for required institutional operations or sleeping hours.
- Provide that room confinement shall only be used when all other less restrictive options have been attempted and exhausted, and not to the extent that it compromises the mental and physical health of the youth; and, provide that room confinement shall not be used for the purposes of punishment, coercion, convenience, or retaliation by staff.

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- Provide that a youth shall only be held in room confinement for the maximum time of four hours, at which point the youth would have to be returned to general programming, placed in individualized programming, or staff shall consult with mental health staff.
- Any room confinement beyond four hours will require documentation, an individualized program, and the approval of the facility superintendent every four hours thereafter.

This bill, sponsored by juvenile justice experts and advocates, including the Chief Probation Officers of California, recognizes the importance of education, programming and other pro-social activities that help improve youth outcomes and meet the rehabilitative goals of the juvenile justice system.

SB 1143 is the re-introduction of SB 124 (Leno), Juveniles: Solitary Confinement, which received Board support via a motion approved on March 26, 2015. Support for SB 1143 is also consistent with your ongoing leadership and efforts to fundamentally change and improve the administration of juvenile justice to achieve improved outcomes for youth in Los Angeles County. For these reasons, the Commission for Children and Families strongly encourages your support of SB 1143. Please contact Executive Director, Tamara Hunter at (213) 974-8108 if you have any questions.

C: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Interim Chief, Probation Department
Children's Deputies
Justice Deputies
County Counsel