



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

THE ISSUE: SB 304 Juvenile Court School Pupils (Portantino, D-LaCanada Flintridge) would expand the components of the joint transition planning policy relative to coordinating education and services for the youth in the juvenile justice system. **(Support)**

“Young people are our greatest treasure and our hope for the future.” How we treat the children in our communities today will help shape the future for all of us tomorrow.”

—Suffer the Little Children: Juvenile Justice in the South, 2004

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

In 2014, 47,655 California youth attended a court school in a juvenile hall or camp. Court schools provide education for juveniles who are incarcerated in facilities run by county probation departments. The average length of stay for youth enrolled in a court school is approximately 30-40 days. These young people often face significant difficulty in securing transferable academic credits while in court schools and in getting academic credit recognized when they exit and seek to enroll in their local districts. Education is central to the rehabilitative mission of the juvenile justice system. Yet youth who attend court schools because of detention in juvenile halls or camps are far more likely to drop out of high school and enter into the adult criminal justice system, than they are to enroll in college or be gainfully employed as young adults. The transition from a court school to a community school is a critical time when youth are vulnerable and may drop out of school altogether. SB 304 would require that the county office of education and probation department develop and implement an individualized transition plan to meet the academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and career needs of each court school pupil detained for more than four consecutive school days.

CHURCH TEACHING

At the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility outside Philadelphia in September, Pope Francis stated, "This time in your life can only have one purpose: to give you a hand in getting back on the right road, to give you a hand in helping you rejoin society. All of us are part of that effort, all of us are invited to encourage, help and enable your rehabilitation." The U.S. Bishops have also called for a restorative justice approach. In their 2000 pastoral statement, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, the Bishops stated, "Just as God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. We are all sinners, and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community."

Talking Points

- ▶ Current law does not go far enough to ensure that these youth receive the support they need during the pivotal time of transition from a court school to a community school and when the vulnerability of dropping out of school is much greater.
- ▶ Requires County offices of education and probation to have a joint transition planning policy that includes collaborations with local educational agencies.
- ▶ Strong support is needed during this crucial period so that the education of these youth is not disrupted.
- ▶ This bill supports these pupils to transitioning successfully from court school to community school and achieving their highest possible education goals.