

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Signs Gipson Bill Focused on Humane Treatment of Incarcerated Youth

SACRAMENTO, Calif --- Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 878 by Assemblymember Gipson which will ensure incarcerated youth are treated fairly when being transported from a juvenile justice facility or presenting before a court. Currently, when youth are transported from a juvenile justice facility, they can be bounded with everything from leg shackles to belly chains without any justification or safety concern. In addition, youth are regularly shackled when testifying before the court, even though this is prohibited for adults except for in extreme circumstances.

“I met with youth who spoke about the humiliation they experienced when appearing in court before their families in handcuffs, even though they had not been convicted of a crime, or how degrading it felt to be restricted with belly chains and leg shackles even though they posed no threat to the people around them,” stated Asm. Gipson. “When dealing with juvenile justice youth, the goal of the system has to be about rehabilitation, and that means treating the youth fairly and humanely.”

AB 878 does not prohibit the use of shackles, but instead requires that local probation departments screen the youth and determine whether they are a flight risk, or represent a threat to themselves or others. This ensures that youth who pose a threat to public safety are still given special attention and at the same time rewards good behavior.

Lucy Salcido Carter, with the Youth Law Center, served as the lead advocate for the bill and was very excited about the good news. "Governor Brown's signature on AB 878 means that juvenile justice youth will be able to participate in the system with dignity. We thank Assemblymember Gipson for his leadership in authoring this bill, which will result in a fairer, more respectful experience for youth in this system."

AB 878 was also supported by: American Civil Liberties Union of California, California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, California Public Defenders Association, Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Children Now, Disability Rights California, Legal Services for Children, National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter, National Center for Youth Law, Pacific Juvenile Defender Center, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties, and Community Action Fund.

“I want to thank the Youth Law Center, all of the bill’s supporters, and members of our Assembly District community,” said Asm. Gipson. This was a team effort and for that I am grateful.”

Mike A. Gipson represents the 64th Assembly District that includes the communities of Carson, Compton, Gardena, Harbor Gateway, Lynwood, North Long Beach, Rancho Dominguez, South Los Angeles, Torrance, Watts/ Willowbrook and Wilmington.