



Executive Director's Watch

CALIFORNIA
Counties

January 27, 2009

The California Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) released a report this morning recommending a massive shift of Juvenile offender and adult drug offenders to California's counties. The shift would involve nearly \$1.4 billion in program and would be funded by an increase in the vehicle license fee and a shift of current vehicle license fees from the DMV to counties.

Here is the Summary of their report:

Despite spending significant sums, the state's success in rehabilitating juvenile and drug-addicted adult offenders has been poor. Specifically, the state spends more than \$200,000 a year to house a juvenile offender in a state youth correctional facility. Although these facilities are intended to rehabilitate youthful offenders, over 50 percent of them return to state custody within three years of their release. Similarly, the state has seen poor results from its in-prison substance abuse programs for adults. While national studies find that in-prison programs can reduce recidivism rates by about 6 percent, California's in-prison programs have not achieved success.

Several times over the last 20 years, the Legislature has achieved notable policy improvements by reviewing state and local government programs and realigning responsibilities to a level of government more likely to achieve good outcomes. The Governor's 2009-10 budget plan contains a proposal to shift some funding for some criminal justice programs from the state to the local level. We recommend that the Legislature expand upon this concept, and implement a policy-driven realignment of nearly \$1.4 billion of state responsibilities to counties along with resources to pay for them. In particular, we propose that the state shift to counties programs for juvenile offenders and adults convicted of drug possession crimes. Under our realignment concept, counties would have broad authority to manage juvenile and drug-addicted adult offenders programs to achieve success.

We recommend that the Legislature finance this criminal justice realignment by increasing the vehicle license fee (VLF) rate to 1 percent (which results in a revenue gain of \$1.1 billion) and redirecting \$359 million of existing VLF revenues. Under this financing approach, realignment would serve as a nearly \$1.4 billion ongoing General Fund budget solution.

The full report may be read at ([LAO Report on Juvenile Realignment](#)). CSAC will provide a full and complete analysis of the proposal as soon as our review is complete. CSAC will be meeting with the LAO later this week to discuss this concept. If you have concerns on this issue, please let us know.

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