A bill winding its way through the legislature, Assembly Bill 1250 (Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles), would drastically impede the ability of organizations like ours to provide essential services to youths and families in our community who need them most.

The bill, at its core, seeks to stop counties from contracting with community based organizations (CBOs), nonprofits, local businesses and other private providers of quality local services that counties and their residents rely on. Counties contract with organizations and businesses that have the expertise, capacity or ability to deliver services more efficiently.

Sponsors of the bill want to force all services to be provided directly by counties so they’ll be required to increase full-time staff. That ignores the fact that some essential public health, public safety and social services for the vulnerable are delivered more effectively or at a lower cost by local non-profit organizations and private businesses.

Caminar was built on a commitment to improve community-based support services and opportunities for people in the recovery process to live and work in the community. We provide a variety of services: family violence and abuse prevention and intervention, co-occurring disorder services, integrated physical and behavioral health services, crisis residential services, substance abuse treatment, supported housing, employment and education services, assisted outpatient treatment, prevention and treatment programs for transition age youth, school- based mental health services, and services for LGBTQ communities.

Our organization and other non-profit and for-profit providers of local services are in the direct crosshairs of AB 1250. The fallout will come at the expense of children and adults in not only San Mateo, Solano and Santa Clara counties, but all the families we serve throughout California.

Charles “Chip” Huggins is CEO of Caminar for Mental Health

“The fallout will come at the expense of children and adults in not only San Mateo, Solano and Santa Clara counties, but all the families we serve throughout California.”

Charles “Chip” Huggins, CEO Caminar for Mental Health