

September 9, 2025

The Honorable John Laird
Senator, District 17
1021 O Street, Room 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 577 (Laird) – State Government
As proposed to be amended September 9, 2025 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard on the Assembly Floor**

Dear Senator Laird,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we appreciate your leadership on this vastly complicated matter. We are proud to support SB 577 based on the amendments proposed September 9th.

Currently, counties, schools, and other local agencies are facing budget crises due in part to recent laws that reopened statutes of limitations for cases of childhood sexual assault from decades in the past.

Those laws rightly sought justice for unspeakable acts that occurred in facilities meant to serve those most in need. Since their enactment, we have seen local agencies and schools face billions in liability costs and skyrocketing insurance premiums that have forced counties to limit public services for those who need them now. All of this is happening at a time when counties are facing unprecedented cuts to essential services funded by the federal government – for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and many other programs that rely on federal support.

We appreciate the provisions in SB 577 that aim to address our concerns, particularly the proposed amendments. These include amendments to law that would establish a reasonable standard for when public agencies are liable for older claims, requiring that they knew and failed to take reasonable action to prevent abuse. Because some cases can lead to damages that local agencies may not be able to afford, SB 577 allows a public entity to request a court to structure those damages. For cases not brought in good faith or with reasonable cause, the bill would expand instances in which a public entity can seek reimbursement for their costs of defense.

These new amendments are in addition to other helpful provisions of the law, reduction of the look-back period for claims of delayed awareness beyond a claimant's 40th birthday to three years; a bar on refiling previously dismissed actions if five or more years from the original filing date have passed; and, clean-up language related to judgment obligation

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bonds. Additionally, existing language would establish requirements that a court, when evaluating a motion for remittitur, consider the mission of the public entity and how damages may impact the mission; whether the award is compensatory for the plaintiff's harm; the severity of harm to the plaintiff; and the egregiousness of the agency's conduct.

Clearly, victims deserve justice. Our concerns are that the current system that endangers essential services for those who most desperately need them is not well balanced. We appreciate the efforts in this bill to achieve a better balance. We look forward to continued conversations on how to prevent these unspeakable acts and will remain committed to evaluating policies that achieve a proper balance between justice and the ability to maintain services for those who most need them today.

Sincerely,



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