



Senator Jerry Hill, 13th Senate District

SB 1106 – Pilot Program Extension for Justice-Involved Young Adult Offenders – Factsheet

IN BRIEF

SB 1106 will extend the sunset of the Transitional Age Youth pilot program established in SB 1004 (Hill, 2016) until January 1, 2022 and add Ventura County to the pilot program.

THE PROBLEM

While legally adults, young offenders age 18-21 are still undergoing significant cognitive brain developments. Research shows this age group can be better served by the juvenile justice system with corresponding age appropriate intensive services. Research has also shown people do not fully develop adult-quality decision-making skills until their early 20's which is often referred to as the "maturity gap." Because of this, young adults are more likely to engage in risk-seeking behavior.

Further, research on adolescent brain development notes "very complex changes are taking place in the brain during adolescence and the brain is not fully "installed" until between ages twenty to twenty-five."¹ Additionally, "scientists have discovered that in the teen brain, the emotional center matures before the frontal lobes. Emotion therefore often holds sway over rational processing."²

As such, in order to address the criminogenic and behavioral needs of adolescents, it is important that developmental appropriate services are provided. Juvenile detention facilities have such services available for adolescents including, cognitive behavioral therapy, mental health treatment, vocational training, and education among other programming intended to specifically address the needs of the emerging adolescent brain. .

BACKGROUND

SB 1004 (Hill, Statutes of 2016, Chapter 865) authorized the counties of Alameda, Butte, Napa, Nevada and Santa Clara to voluntarily enact a pilot program that allows young adult offenders age 18-21 to be housed in a juvenile detention facility, instead of adult county jail. Because these young adults will be housed in juvenile detention facilities they will have services available to them such as mental health, vocational, and educational services. The existing pilot

program includes the following permissions and exclusions:

- Young adults who commit serious or violent felonies, have prior serious or violent offenses, or must register as sex offenders are not eligible for the program
- The length of custody within a county juvenile hall can be no longer than 1 year
- Young adults must be assessed by the county probation department for their fitness to participate in the program
- Upon being charged with an offense, young adults who are deemed eligible for the program must enter into deferred entry of judgement – plead guilty to their crime – and if the young adult successfully completes the program, he or she will have the charges dismissed
- If a young adult is deemed not eligible for the pilot program, or if he or she does not wish to plead guilty and enter the program, court proceedings will continue as in any other case
- A young adult can be removed from the program by the county probation department at any time if they are not meeting the standards set forth. After a participant is notified they may no longer be eligible for the program, the Court will hold a hearing to consider the matter
- Young adults participating in the pilot program will be housed in juvenile detention facilities, but must be housed in separate wings from younger minor offenders
- A county must receive approval from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) that the county's juvenile hall facility is suitable for housing young adults
- A county must establish a multidisciplinary team that meets periodically to review implementation of the pilot program

- The bill stipulates participation in the pilot program should not replace opportunities for community supervision
- Counties will submit data on the pilot program to BSCC, who will conduct an outcome evaluation

SOLUTION

The SB 1004 pilot program is currently underway; however, the existing sunset date in the bill is January 1, 2020. Once the bill was enacted, there were processes completed by the Board of State and Community Corrections to certify the programs for compliance with State and Federal requirements. Further, there were efforts to establish the county multidisciplinary team, develop criteria for the program, and coordinate with local stakeholders. As a result of this thorough implementation process, the programs were not fully operational by the enactment date. Because the pilot program requires an evaluation to be conducted on the program and its effectiveness, it's important the sunset date be extended to January 1, 2022 to account for the implementation time at the beginning of the pilot as well as authorize the program to operate for a length of time that delivers the most comprehensive and evidence based evaluation. Additionally, by adding Ventura County to the program it will add to the dataset and provide valuable information.

SUPPORT

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Chief Probation Officers of California
Ventura County Board of Supervisors

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Meegen Murray – Meegen.Murray@sen.ca.gov

Video on Adolescent Brain Development

Dr. Laurence Steinberg, Temple University

Author of “Age of Opportunity: Lessons for the New Science of Adolescence”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrC9fTdqbu4>

¹ Pat Wolfe, “The Adolescent Brain: A Work in Progress.” *The Mind Matters*. 2011.

² Ibid.