

Budget Reflects Voter Demands for Increased Investment in Community-Based Crime Prevention

Increased Commitment to Smart Justice Practices Still Needed to Reduce Annual \$10 billion Allocation to Prisons

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SACRAMENTO – The state legislature’s budget conference committee tonight recommended a 2016-2017 budget that reflects both the legislature’s longstanding commitment to prioritizing the rehabilitation of formerly incarcerated individuals as well as voter demands for increased investments in community-based crime prevention programs aimed at stopping the cycle of crime. The full legislature will vote to approve the recommendations of the committee early next week.

Included in the budget package, which also must be approved by Gov. Jerry Brown, is \$28 million in additional funding for Prop. 47 investment programs, including community-based crime prevention programs, trauma recovery services for victims of crime and truancy and dropout prevention programs for at-risk schoolchildren. This is on top of the \$40 million already appropriated by Brown in earlier versions of his budget to the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund, established by Proposition 47. The Safe Neighborhood and Schools Fund is the repository for the state savings resulting from a reduction in incarceration under Prop. 47, approved by 60 percent of state voters in November 2014.

Also included in the budget is \$15 million to fund pre-booking diversion pilot programs that will address drug-related crimes. The funding will be awarded to local jurisdictions that want to implement a program modeled after Seattle’s innovative Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (L.E.A.D.) program, which allows law enforcement officers to redirect low-level offenders engaged in drug or prostitution activity to community-based services, instead of jail or prosecution.

The budget also contains \$47 million for the CalWORKS housing support program, which helps homeless or unstably-housed families with children, including formerly incarcerated individuals, participating in the state’s Welfare-to-Work program find permanent housing and employment, keys to obtaining economic security and family stability.

The following can be attributed to John J. Bauters, policy director for Californians for Safety and Justice:

“The legislature deserves credit for continuing to listen to people and

communities negatively affected by our criminal justice system and the state's historical over-reliance on incarceration. There are better ways to improve public safety in California and this budget reflects increasing support for smart approaches to safety and justice. But we must continue to join together and expand smart justice practices like targeted deterrence strategies, diversion programs, collaborative court models and neighborhood problem solving that we know will enhance the health and safety of our communities while reducing the amount of money the state spends on prisons every year.”