



June 7, 2023

The Honorable Dr. Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 551 (Portantino): Mental health boards
As Amended May 1 – SUPPORT IF AMENDED
Set for Hearing June 13, 2023**

Dear Chair Wood:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we respectfully hold a "Support if Amended" position on Senate Bill 551 (Portantino). This measure would impose additional requirements on the composition of community mental health boards, which are already subject to various membership requirements.

While counties greatly appreciate the removal of the provisions related to the diversion of specific MHSA funds, the May 1st amendments impose additional requirements on the composition of community mental health boards that are already subject to various membership requirements. Specifically, SB 551 would require 20 percent of a board's membership to be reserved for individuals employed by a local educational agency and 20 percent for individuals 25 years of age or younger in counties with a population of 500,000 or more. While counties agree that local educational agencies and youth are important voices to be represented, counties are concerned about the prescriptive nature of the amendments. We acknowledge the composition requirements adjust for county population size; however, counties are still concerned the additional requirements will present potential challenges for community mental health boards to fill and maintain these memberships.

Counties join the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) in requesting the following amendments to the bill:

Amendment to 5604 (a)(2)(D): ~~*In counties with a population of 500,000 or more, at least 20 percent of the board shall be employed by a local educational agency, and at least 20 percent of the board shall be an individual who is 25 years of age or*~~

~~younger. In counties with a population of fewer than 500,000, but more than 100,000,~~ In counties with a population of 100,000 or more, at least one member of the board shall be employed by a local educational agency, and at least one member shall be an individual who is 25 years of age or younger. An education advocate may be substituted for either or both of these members.

For purposes of this section, "education advocate" means a parent of a student, representative of a youth mental health organization, or retired educator or administrator.

Amendment to 5604 (f)(2): No more than 49 percent of the members of a county's mental health board may own or operate an organization or business *or be employed by a local education agency* that financially benefits from a proposed or adopted Mental Health Services Act plan.

Counties are committed to the diversity of its mental health boards to ensure representation reflects the population, demographics, and needs specific to each jurisdiction. We believe the proposed amendments honor those important goals, while also building in the flexibility counties will need to populate and maintain those boards and guard against conflicts of interests. Should you have questions about our position, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jolie Onodera, CSAC Senior Legislative Advocate at jonordera@counties.org, Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, UCC Legislative Advocate at kbl@hbeadvocacy.com and Sarah Dukett, RCRC Legislative Advocate at sdukett@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,



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cc: The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Member, California State Senate
Members and Consultants, Senate Health Committee
Gino Folchi, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus