



May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2591 (Quirk-Silva) – Local government: youth commission
As Amended April 9, 2024 – OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Wicks:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we regretfully oppose Assembly Bill 2591 (Quirk-Silva). This bill creates a new mandated local program by requiring cities and counties to establish a youth commission in response to petitions from high school pupils enrolled in their jurisdiction.

Counties and cities do not take issue with the policy of establishing local youth commissions. Local governments have the authority to create boards and commissions based on local needs, available funding, and staff resources. Local governments frequently use that authority to establish boards, commissions, and advisory bodies to ensure they are informed by the diverse perspectives of their communities. While we appreciate the bill's intent to expand access to civic engagement for youth, as currently drafted, the provisions would create a new mandate that will require significant investment in staff resources without a corresponding allocation of funds. Furthermore, the bill would override the structure of the existing ninety-nine local youth commissions that were developed based on local needs and conditions.

As Brown Act-governed bodies, commissions require financial resources to fund the staff time required to respond to the initial petition and create the body, fill vacancies, provide the venue, staff the meetings, and fulfill Brown Act requirements (e.g., agenda preparation, meeting minutes, coordination with commission members). In addition, local jurisdictions will likely incur costs related to liability insurance, travel, background checks mandated reporter training for staff, and Brown Act training for commission members.

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Given the serious fiscal challenges that exist at all levels of government, it is increasingly unlikely that counties and cities would have the necessary resources to meet this new requirement.

In addition to the real, direct costs imposed on local governments, the bill creates unnecessary opportunity costs for the time spent on a state-prescribed activity that could have been spent on issues of greater need for that community. Given the large backlog of unpaid state mandate claims, local jurisdictions are struggling to keep existing state-mandated programs operating. According to data obtained from the State Controller's Office, as of mid-February 2024, the state owes local agencies \$\$969 million including accrued interest for costs incurred to carry out the state's programs.

Establishing new meeting bodies, which would presumably be funded by redirecting local General Fund dollars from existing programs, must remain a local decision based on local conditions and needs. For the reasons outlined above, RCRC, CSAC, UCC, and Cal Cities respectfully oppose AB 2591 and request your "No" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations.

Sincerely,



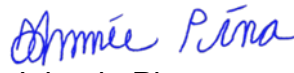
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cc: The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus