



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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May 28, 2024
Senator Angelique Ashby
1021 O Street, Suite 7320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate Bill 1005
SUPPORT

Dear Senator Ashby:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Senate Bill 1005 (Ashby).

SB 1005 addresses alternatives to filing a petition by probation officers in appropriate cases involving youth. Welfare and Institutions Code Section 654 provides probation departments with broad authority and options for alternative types of supervision for minors. However, there is currently no specific statutory authority for youth courts. This bill amends WIC section 654 to authorize a probation officer to refer an offense to a youth, peer, or teen court established and maintained by the probation officer or by a community-based organization, Indian tribe, tribal court, or private or public agency, to implement restorative justice practices designed to enable peer youth jurors to hear cases and make dispositions for offenses committed by youth. SB 1005 also specifies that such referral offenses may include, but are not limited to, infractions or misdemeanors specified in section 48900 of the Education Code, or for any other violation the probation officer may determine appropriate for referral.

Youth courts were first established in the State in the 1980s. In appropriate cases, youth are referred to youth court from probation, law enforcement, and schools and diverted away from the juvenile justice system. The Judicial Council of California has described the program as follows: "Through direct participation, youth court is designed to educate youth about the juvenile justice system. Youth courts use a restorative and trauma-informed approach where youth offenders are held accountable for their actions and reflect on the poor decisions that brought them to youth court in the first place. By using a restorative approach, the youth's personal strengths are identified, and the young person agrees to repair the harm that was done while also restoring relations with their families, schools, and communities."

We support the restorative approach offered by youth court. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Tamar Tokat in our Legislative Office at 916-442-0668.

Very Truly Yours,

GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney