

The darker side of law enforcement rears its ugly head

May 24, 2023



The state released its May revision for the 2023/24 budget. The assault on the funding at both the adult and juvenile offender level is staggering. Policies of early release have reduced Pelican Bay State Prison down to approximately 1,650 inmates and total CDCR inmate population to about 92,000.

Now, Gov. Gavin Newsom is poised to shut down and permanently disable youth justice and turn over all adjudication of youth offenders to all 58 individual counties. The impact of this decision on Del Norte County will be profound.

Law enforcement realignment, including the operations of all probation departments, was voted by the Senate via SB 823 and signed into law two years ago. Newsom, with a stroke of his signature will close all youth detention authority facilities, effective July 1.

Del Norte had already decided to close its Juvenile Hall, effective July 1. Per an inter-county agreement, Del Norte youth who offend will be detained in either Humboldt or Shasta counties; however, all costs associated

with a Del Norte ward (minor) must be paid by Del Norte.

These offenders and follow-up programs, albeit rare, will tax the general fund. The long, practiced process of sending letters opposing SB 823 from Del Norte Chief Probation Officer Lonnie Reyman and the 57 other chief probation officers has not resonated in the ears of Newsom nor legislators up and down the Golden State.

Reyman stated, “SB 823 realignment was a poorly formulated plan by the governor to advance reformation in juvenile justice that discounted and disregarded the multiplicity of concerns raised by probation experts.” Reyman continued, “Del Norte County has worked to formulate plans and responses to expect this reform and mitigate the negative fallout to the best of our (DN probation) ability for our community and the youth we serve. “

Reyman lamented, “we’re well past any opportunity to argue the merits of this change. Probation is forced to perform without the level and support from the state that should have been in place since the passage of SB 823.”

Paul Dillard, chairman of the county’s Juvenile justice commission, was furious with the state pulling out of juvenile justice.

“This is another assault on the state justice commission, masked by Gov. Newsom, in a budget cut at the cost of juvenile offenders.” Dillard said. “Juveniles subsequently convicted of serious felonies, assault, murder, robbery and rape will no longer be confined in state corrections facilities and will be confined to county juvenile halls until completion of their sentences up to age 25. This will be nightmare for juvenile halls!”

Dillard expressed his lack of confidence in the state’s decision to turn over this burden to the counties. He reminded supervisors, the absence of a juvenile hall in Del Norte does not mean Del Norte is off the hook financially. Humboldt and Shasta counties will continue to bill back Del Norte for all costs.

3rd District constituent Branden Bieber wrote a letter to all five supervisors to restore law and order, financial responsibility and ethics into its conduct of complete compliance with the state, changing the face of our community.

The Board meets Tuesday, May 23, at 10 a.m. at the Flynn Center.