



# Judicial Council of California

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March 27, 2025

Hon. Jesse Arreguín  
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 545  
Sacramento, California 95814

**Subject: Senate Bill 357 (Menjivar), as introduced—Oppose**

Dear Senator Arreguín:

The Judicial Council regrettably opposes Senate Bill 357 which would authorize a county board of supervisors to delegate all or part of the juvenile justice related duties of the probation department or a probation officer to another county department. Current law requires the probation department to provide numerous services to the juvenile court that are essential to its ability to fulfill its statutory duties to protect public safety, redress injuries to victims, and protect the best interests of the youth under the court's jurisdiction. SB 357 would unilaterally allow the delegation of probation duties to another county department without providing the juvenile court with any express authority or oversight.

Welfare and Institutions Code [section 281](#) authorizes the juvenile court to order the probation department to investigate “any matter involving the custody, status, or welfare of a minor or minors” and file a report with the court. Under that authority the council has adopted a number of rules of court specifically requiring the probation department to prepare various reports and recommendations, including social study reports on all wards, reports and recommendations on whether a youth should be transferred to adult court or maintained under juvenile court jurisdiction, preparation of individualized rehabilitation plans for youth committed to a secure youth treatment facility, and petitions to seal juvenile court records.

These examples demonstrate the critical link between the probation department and the juvenile court which are not addressed in SB 357. Simply put, the juvenile courts would be unable to do their work without the services of the probation department in providing the court with reports and recommendations, supervising youth in the community, and overseeing the juvenile halls, ranches and camps which house these youth. Moreover, in most counties, the court still has a critical role in appointing the Chief Probation Officer pursuant to Government Code section [27770](#). Absent express provisions granting the court the ability to make such orders to any other

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county department to whom probation's authority is delegated, SB 357 could result in juvenile courts across California facing a patchwork of services and departments and being unable to fulfill their critical statutory mission in a timely and effective manner. In addition, the role of the court in probation governance suggests that any decision to delegate probation duties should be undertaken in consultation with the court, rather than unilaterally.

Finally, we note that probation officers are peace officers under the law<sup>1</sup> with the powers and responsibilities attendant to that status, and there is nothing in SB 357 that indicates that the other county agencies serving youth would have those powers, which would undermine the trust of the court in their ability to protect public safety while overseeing youth subject to juvenile court jurisdiction. Juvenile probation officers are also required to complete specified training hours to ensure that they are prepared to implement the standards and regulations that apply in youth facilities. Absent very specific statutory requirements to ensure that these services can and will be provided safely and effectively by an alternative designated entity, the courts will be left in an untenable position with uncertainty about whether they can effectively adjudicate these essential matters and have their dispositional orders carried out by an agency that is responsive and accountable to the court.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council opposes SB 357.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Tracy Kenny at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,



Cory T. Jaspersen  
Director  
Governmental Affairs

CTJ/TK/Imm

cc: Members, Senate Public Safety Committee  
Hon. Caroline Menjivar, Member of the Senate, 20th District  
Stephanie Jordan, Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee  
Alex Barnett, Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee  
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Office of Policy  
Jith Meganathan, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Michelle Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California

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<sup>1</sup> See Welfare and Institutions Code section [283](#).