
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1902 (Pellerin) - Secure youth treatment facilities

Version: June 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: AB 1902 would authorize a court to order an extended confinement for a person who is set to be discharged from a secure youth treatment facility (SYTF) for up to four years based on a finding that the person is physically dangerous to the public. To the extent this bill would increase local duties relating to the confinement of persons in a SYTF, this bill would impose a state mandated local program.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown costs to the counties to extend SYTF confinement from two years to up to four years upon a court finding. For a cost reference, the average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$80,000. With the small number of youths who have SYTF commitments extended under Welfare and Institutions Code 876, extensions could go on indefinitely, so the person could be over age 18, or even over age 25. Regardless, their custody and control remains with the county, either in the SYTF or, for those persons over age 25, who remain under juvenile court jurisdiction, the court could refer them for a civil commitment or transfer custody to adult probation to place the person in an adult institution (but still as a ward of the juvenile court until the commitment ends). Actual incarceration costs to counties will depend on the number of convictions and the length of each sentence. Generally, county incarceration costs are not reimbursable state mandates pursuant to Proposition 30 (2012).

Likely significant court cost pressure for additional hearings in juvenile courts to determine if a person set for discharge is physically dangerous to the public. These hearings are among the costliest hearings held in juvenile courts. Each hearing may last at least a week of court time, with concomitant costs to the District Attorney, appointed defense counsel, and the juvenile probation department. Additionally, there are court costs for expert witnesses that are routinely necessary, including experts in adolescent neuropsychology and intellectual disability experts.

Background: Generally, any person between the age of 12 and 17 who commits a crime falls within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. This extends to a youth alleged to have committed a crime before their 18th birthday, even if they were an adult at the time of arrest or commencement of proceedings. The jurisdiction of the juvenile court generally continues until the youth is 21 years old, unless the youth committed a 707(b) offense, then the court may retain jurisdiction until the person attains 23 years of age. Additionally, if the youth had, in criminal court, faced an aggregate sentence of 7 years or more, the juvenile court's jurisdiction continues until the youth turns 25.

Existing law provides that any person whose case originated in juvenile court shall remain, if the person is held in secure detention, in a county juvenile facility until the

person attains 25 years of age, unless the probation department petitions the court to house a person who is 19 years of age or older in an adult facility, including a jail or other facility established for the purpose of confinement of adults.

With the passage of SB 823 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 337, Statutes of 2020, the state planned the closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and realigned the responsibility for managing all youth under the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts to county probation departments. This change resulted in the reallocation of funding to counties to enable them to meet the needs of youth who would have previously been committed to DJJ

SB 92 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 18/2021 established a new dispositional option for juveniles ages 14 and over who are adjudicated for a Welfare and Institutions Code section 707(b) offense (i.e., a specified serious or violent felony) and for whom a less restrictive alternative disposition is not suitable. This dispositional option, commitment to an SYTF, is a secured, custodial setting. Counties are not required to establish an SYTF and may contract with another county that has an SYTF to house this population. A county is also authorized to establish an SYTF to serve as a regional center for the commitment of juveniles from one or more counties.