

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2257 (Hart)

As Amended May 19, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Authorizes a county board of supervisors (BOS) to establish the position of jail administrator to be the executive officer of all county jails, and to have supervisory authority over all staff and incarcerated individuals, although the sheriff shall retain authority to supervise, direct, discipline, or remove the jail administrator.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Authorizes a BOS to, by resolution, establish the position of jail administrator.
- 2) Provides that if the BOS establishes the position of jail administrator, the sheriff of the county shall nominate a candidate to fill the position and submit that nomination to the BOS within 90 days of the establishment of the position.
- 3) Requires the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment of the candidate, by resolution, within 60 days of the submission.
- 4) Provides that in determining whether to confirm or deny the appointment, the BOS may consider any relevant factor, including, but limited to, any of the following:
  - a) Professional experience in corrections management.
  - b) Experience managing public budgets.
  - c) Extensive familiarity with specified California regulations and national standards for jail accreditation.
  - d) Extensive familiarity with the requirements for appropriate medical and mental health care within a correctional setting.
  - e) Demonstrated commitment to protecting the civil and human rights of incarcerated individuals.
  - f) Knowledge of best practices and evidence-based approaches to rehabilitation.
- 5) Requires the sheriff, if the BOS denies the candidate pursuant to the above, to nominate a different candidate to fill the position and submit that nomination to the BOS within 60 days of the denial.
- 6) Requires the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment of the new candidate pursuant to the procedures requiring the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment, as specified.
- 7) Requires a candidate who is nominated for the position, but has not been approved or denied by the BOS, to serve as the acting jail administrator during the review process.
- 8) Requires a jail administrator to have the following powers and duties:

- a) They shall be the executive officer of all county jails and have supervisory authority over all staff and incarcerated individuals.
  - b) Subject to the sheriff's supervision, as specified, they shall serve a term of three years.
  - c) If an acting jail administrator appointed within three days of a vacancy is confirmed, as specified below, their time spent as acting jail administrator before being confirmed does not count towards the three-year term.
  - d) If the person is a peace officer, they shall retain peace officer status to the extent allowable, as specified.
- 9) Provides that if a jail administrator is appointed, the sheriff shall retain authority to supervise, direct the day-to-day operations of, evaluate, discipline, or remove the jail administrator.
- 10) Provides that subject to the below provision permitting a sheriff to nominate a new candidate to replace the jail administrator when the term expires, if there is a vacancy in the jail administrator position for any reason, including, but not limited to, expiration of the three-year term, removal of the jail administrator by the sheriff, as specified, or resignation of the jail administrator, all of the following apply:
- a) The sheriff shall appoint an acting jail administrator within three days of the vacancy.
  - b) Subject to the immediately subsequent provision, the acting jail administrator shall not serve for more than 150 days.
  - c) The BOS may authorize the acting jail administrator to serve additional 60-day terms.
- 11) Requires the sheriff, if an acting jail administrator's term expires and a new candidate has not been confirmed, as specified, to appoint a different jail administrator within three days of the expiration, who shall serve consistent with the below.
- 12) Requires the sheriff to nominate a new candidate to fill the position and submit that nomination to the board within 90 days of the vacancy.
- 13) Authorizes the sheriff to nominate the acting jail administrator, as specified, as the new candidate.
- 14) Requires the confirmation or denial of the candidate to proceed consistent with the procedures requiring the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment and the sheriff to nominate a different candidate if the BOS denies the candidate.
- 15) Specifies that up to six months before a jail administrator's three-year term expires, the sheriff may nominate and submit to the BOS a new candidate to replace that jail administrator when the term expires.
- 16) Requires the confirmation or denial of the candidate to proceed consistent with the procedures requiring the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment and the sheriff to nominate a different candidate if the board denies the candidate.

- 17) Provides that the provision of existing law that requires the sheriff to take charge of and be the sole and exclusive authority to keep the county jail and the incarcerated persons in it, as specified, does not apply to a county that has appointed a jail administrator.
- 18) Provides that "sheriff" includes a jail administrator appointed pursuant to this bill, for purposes of the Penal Code chapter outlining specified sheriff duties related to county jails.

## COMMENTS

### According to the Author

"California's county jails are in crisis. Jail deaths are at record highs. People with mental illness languish without adequate care. Staffing shortages persist, while financial mismanagement threatens essential public services.

"Since the passage of Senate Bill 911 in 1993, elected sheriffs have held sole and exclusive authority over the operation of county jails. At the same time, county boards of supervisors have remained legally obligated to fund those jails — without authority to compel needed changes. With their policymaking authority ending at the jail door, boards of supervisors are put in the position of writing blank checks while jail issues persist. AB 2257 will reintroduce local choice over jail administration and encourage collaboration and accountability. If a sheriff-run model is serving the community well, it should continue. If not—and particularly in the face of longstanding issues—a board of supervisors should have the authority to evaluate and pursue a structure that better serves the community. Whether counties act to change their jail governance systems or not, having a second option raises the incentive for all parties to improve jail operations and management."

### Arguments in Support

No longer applicable.

### Arguments in Opposition

No longer applicable.

## FISCAL COMMENTS

Unknown. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

## VOTES

### ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 5-3-1

**YES:** Schultz, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Sharp-Collins

**NO:** Alanis, Lackey, Ramos

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Nguyen

## UPDATED

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