

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2257 (Hart)

As Amended August 3, 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.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Require the BOS' confirmation or denial of the appointment of the candidate to be made by majority vote, rather than by a resolution.
- 2) Require the BOS, before determining whether to confirm or deny the appointment, as specified, to hold a public hearing on the topic of jail operations.
- 3) Remove a provision requiring a candidate who is nominated for a jail administrator position that has never been filled, but has not been confirmed or denied by the BOS, to serve as the interim jail administrator during the review process, as specified.
- 4) Specify that the procedures governing a vacancy in the jail administrator position apply following the establishment of the position and the BOS's initial decision to confirm or deny the appointment of a candidate.
- 5) Make technical confirming changes.

COMMENTS

As Passed by the Assembly, this bill: Authorized 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) Authorized a BOS to, by resolution, establish the position of jail administrator.
- 2) Provided 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) Required the BOS to confirm or deny the appointment of the candidate, by resolution, within 60 days of the submission.
- 4) Provided that in determining whether to confirm or deny the appointment, the BOS may consider any relevant factor, including, but not 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) Required 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) Required 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) Required a candidate who is nominated for a jail administrator position that has never been filled but has not been confirmed or denied by the BOS to serve as the interim jail administrator during the review process.
- 8) Required 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 interim jail administrator, as specified, or an acting jail administrator appointed within three days of a vacancy, as specified, is confirmed, their time spent as interim or 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) Provided 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) Provided 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) Required the sheriff, if an acting jail administrator's term expires and a 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) Required the sheriff to nominate a candidate to fill the position and submit that nomination to the board within 90 days of the vacancy.
 - 13) Authorized the sheriff to nominate the acting jail administrator, as specified, as the candidate.
 - 14) Required 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) Specified that up to six months before a jail administrator's three-year term expires, the sheriff may nominate and submit to the BOS a candidate to serve when the term expires.
 - 16) Required 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) Provided 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) Provided 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.

According to the Author

"California's county jails are in crisis. Deaths are occurring at record-high levels, people with mental illness are languishing, and costs are skyrocketing without improved outcomes.

"Sheriffs are responsible for operating jails. Boards of supervisors are responsible for funding jails and bearing legal liability. While boards of supervisors are required to fund the day-to-day operations of county jails — and pay massive legal settlements when things go wrong — boards of supervisors have no direct authority to improve jail practices. Boards of supervisors are prevented from exercising their statutory budgetary and oversight responsibilities over jails.

"AB 2257 seeks to bring balance to the shared governance responsibilities that boards of supervisors and sheriffs have in administering county jails, for the benefit of the public, people in custody, and the correctional workforce.

"This modest bill will give boards of supervisors the authority to confirm a sheriff-nominated jail administrator to a three-year term, while leaving the day-to-day management of the jail within the sheriff's office. By giving boards of supervisors a direct, limited policy lever to influence jail administration, this bill will incentivize greater collaboration between sheriffs and boards of supervisors in operating county jails.

"This bill fills a gap in existing law and builds on the Legislature's recent sheriff oversight bills to provide counties with a practical tool to address known jail issues and work proactively to improve outcomes."

Arguments in Support

According to the *County of Santa Barbara*, "Under the provisions of AB 2257, the sheriff would nominate candidates for the position, subject to confirmation by the Board of Supervisors. The Board could consider factors such as corrections management experience, knowledge of jail regulations and health care requirements, commitment to civil rights protections, and familiarity with rehabilitation best practices. The bill also would establish appointment timelines, acting administrator procedures, and three-year terms for confirmed jail administrators.

"A confirmed jail administrator would serve as the executive officer of county jails with supervisory authority over jail staff and incarcerated individuals. The bill also sets forth a structured process for vacancies, denials, interim appointments, and reappointments, including limits on acting appointments and requirements for ongoing board review and confirmation. Taken together, the provisions of AB 2257 would establish a new, shared governance model in which sheriffs retain operational oversight authority, but county boards of supervisors are granted a formal confirmation role and greater involvement in jail leadership selection and accountability.

"The County of Santa Barbara has long supported criminal justice reforms that advance public safety while promoting rehabilitation, diversion, and successful reentry. The County's policy platform emphasizes reducing recidivism and strengthening behavioral health and supportive services for justice-involved individuals.

"By giving boards of supervisors the authority to establish the position of county jail administrator and pursue a collaborative governance model as contemplated in the bill, AB 2257 would create greater opportunities for counties to align jail leadership with broader public safety, rehabilitation, behavioral health, and reentry objectives. While preserving the sheriff's operational authority, AB 2257 recognizes the significant fiscal, policy, and service delivery responsibilities counties bear for detention facilities and promotes stronger coordination between custody operations and the county programs that support successful treatment, education, and reentry outcomes."

Arguments in Opposition

According to the *California State Sheriff's Association*, AB 2257 "would allow a county board of supervisors to establish the position of jail administrator and provide that such person would be the executive officer of all county jails and have supervisory authority over all staff and incarcerated individuals.

"Many if not most sheriffs already employ a chief deputy or assistant sheriff over corrections. The passage of this bill and the choice by a county board to exert the authority it creates would likely put the sheriff in a position of having to take into account whether the board would confirm their choice to serve as the jail administrator. This vital role should be filled by the person best suited to do the work, without having to worry about what boils down to a popularity contest.

"The bill's supporting materials indicate this new version of AB 2257 is still intended to give leverage over the operations of the county's jails to the board. In reality, it imposes a labyrinth of

rules about how a sheriff's choice for jail administrator is selected, confirmed, overseen, and replaced. It is unclear whether this bill requires a different jail administrator to be appointed and confirmed every three years, but even if the incumbent can be reappointed, the county would have to repeat the confirmation process. And given that only the sheriff can remove the jail administrator, any leverage perceived to be obtained by the board effectively disappears as soon as the appointee is confirmed.

"Sheriffs are elected county officials subject to specific yet broad oversight from entities including state and federal courts, the California Attorney General, the civil grand jury, the Board of State and Community Corrections, and others, not to mention the voters who elect the sheriff every four years. The legislature should not politicize an important position within the Sheriff's office, especially when there is no indication that the complicated governance change contemplated by this bill will lead to better outcomes in the jail.

"In the end, this awkward, vague, and confusing measure will only impede meaningful efforts to appropriately oversee the jails while serving as a backdoor attempt by the board to control sheriff operations."

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

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 41-25-14

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Caloza, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Jackson, Kalra, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Papan, Pellerin, Ransom, Rogers, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ward, Wicks, Zbur, Rivas

NO: Alanis, Ávila Farías, Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Sanchez, Soria, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bains, Calderon, Carrillo, Irwin, Krell, Nguyen, Pacheco, Patel, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Stefani, Wilson

UPDATED

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