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# California State Senate

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NINTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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SUBCOMMITTEE 5:  
PUBLIC SAFETY & LABOR

COMMITTEES  
ENERGY, UTILITIES &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING



March 16, 2017

Yolo County Board of Supervisors  
625 Court Street, Room 204  
Woodland, CA 95695

Dear Yolo County Board of Supervisors:

We are writing to seek your assistance in examining the circumstances and procedures involving the detention of the fourteen-year-old Honduran boy, known as G.E., at the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility, who was detained despite being granted asylum on January 10<sup>th</sup> of this year. In addition to G.E., we are seeking information on other unaccompanied children in your custody.

We are deeply disturbed by the San Francisco Chronicle's account of what occurred to the Honduran boy, particularly that "[d]uring his 11 months in jail, much of it [was] spent alone in his cell, [where] he... repeatedly tried to harm himself and has lashed out at times, causing staff in the facility to douse him with pepper spray or bind his wrists and ankles." (*Honduran boy, 14, wins U.S. asylum but remains in jail*, Karen de Sa, San Francisco Chronicle, March 5, 2017.)

We understand from recent press reports that your facility secured external placement for G.E. on Monday. However, we want to ensure that other unaccompanied children in similar circumstances receive fair and humane treatment.

According to information obtained by the Senate, the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility provides housing and services for up to twenty-four unaccompanied children – supported by \$2.9 million dollar annual grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Please help us to understand how the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility manages and treats its population of unaccompanied children by responding to the following questions:

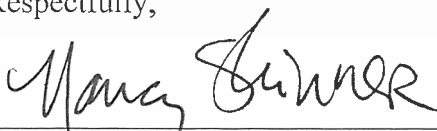
- (1) How many unaccompanied children are being housed in the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility, and how long has each been held to date?
- (2) Do any of the unaccompanied children being held have criminal backgrounds, here or in country of origin? And if so, how was the determination of a criminal background made?

- (3) How is it that a fourteen-year-old was granted asylum, but continued to be detained in the Yolo county detention facility? How will Yolo County ensure that this does not happen again in the future?
- (4) Please outline the steps that Yolo County took to assist ORR with finding a placement for the 14-year-old Honduran boy.
- (5) There have been reports that Yolo County Health and Human Services will not accept responsibility for these unaccompanied children and hesitates to place them in Yolo County. Is this statement accurate?
- (6) Please provide the following information:
  - a. A summary of the medical, mental and dental health care provided to these children, including staff ratios and whether the providers are bi-lingual.
  - b. A copy of Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility's policy on use-of-force, including all policy related to the use of pepper spray and restraints.
  - c. A copy of Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility's policy on recreation and out-of-cell time.
  - d. A list of all programs, including education, offered to the unaccompanied children.
- (7) Senate staff was not allowed to speak with the unaccompanied children while conducting a recent oversight visit of the juvenile detention facility. Please provide a complete copy of the visitation policies for the unaccompanied children.

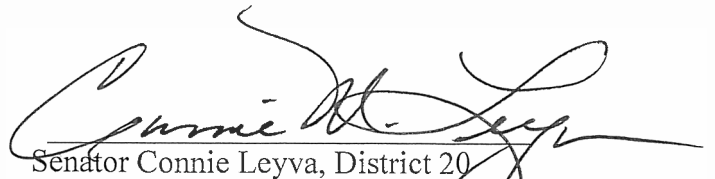
The Senate is concerned about not only the detention of unaccompanied children, but also the conditions in which the children are being held. The information sought will help to inform the Senate on what steps need to be taken to ensure the humane treatment of all unaccompanied children in Yolo County.

We thank you for your time and cooperation, and look forward to receiving your response by April 3, 2017.

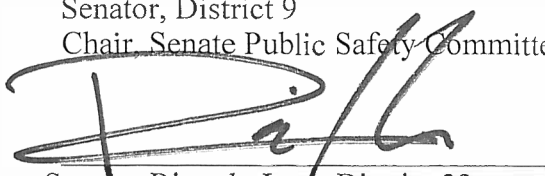
Respectfully,




Nancy Skinner  
Senator, District 9  
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee



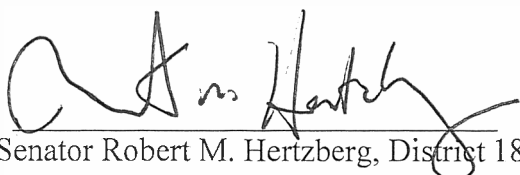
Senator Connie Leyva, District 20



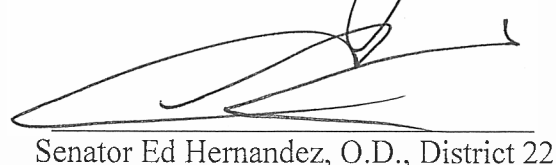
Senator Ricardo Lara, District 33




Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, District 19



Senator Robert M. Hertzberg, District 18



Senator Ed Hernandez, O.D., District 22



Senator Jim Beall, District 15



Senator Scott Wiener, District 11