



California State Association of Counties
www.counties.org
916.327.7500
1100 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2022

Contact: Farrah McDaid Ting, Director of Public Affairs and Member Services
Phone: (916) 595-7360; Email: fmcting@counties.org

CSAC First Vice President Washington Outlines Ongoing CARE Court (SB 1338) Concerns for Counties

SACRAMENTO – The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) today issued the following statement regarding the Assembly Health Committee hearing on Senate Bill 1338 (Umberg and Eggman), otherwise known as the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment Court Program.

“Counties across the state still share significant concerns regarding resources - not just as it relates to funding - but also county capacity and accountability,” said Chuck Washington, Riverside County Supervisor, CSAC First Vice President, and Chair of the CSAC Homelessness Action Team, during public comment on the bill. “We cannot say this enough - the success of CARE Courts is only possible if the state guarantees that those of us on the ground have the time, resources, capacity and support required to be successful.”

County concerns with SB 1338 as heard in the committee today include:

- Punitive sanctions that do not address the responsibility of all levels of government in providing housing and that would harm the very county system tasked with assisting CARE Court respondents.
- The absence of a deliberative phase-in process to allow the most prepared counties to implement and gather data first so that future additional counties, many without the resources or workforce capacity to implement CARE Courts, can implement to the extent that these critical resources are available.
- A lack of identified sustainable funding or mechanisms to provide and protect the resources needed to implement and sustain CARE Courts. While the funding issue may be addressed through the ongoing state budget process and should be developed to ensure the preservation of existing services and programs, counties also request statutory provisions to ensure protections for counties as they take on the new responsibilities and associated costs within SB 1338.

“CARE Courts impose a new host of responsibilities on counties; however, some insist counties have all the funding they need to undertake these new obligations,” said CSAC Executive Director Graham Knaus. “In a year with the largest-ever state surplus, now is not the time to jeopardize existing behavioral health for thousands of Californians in order to successfully implement CARE Court. All costs associated with CARE Court must be funded or this promising program will fail.”

California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is the voice of California’s 58 counties at the state and federal level.

###