



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**SEP 25 2022**

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2666 without my signature. This bill would require the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) to establish and administer a grant program for behavioral health professionals, who are participating in internships or completing licensure hours, through unpaid positions at Federally qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

I share the author's commitment to supporting a strong pipeline of trained behavioral health professionals, but this program is duplicative of California's recent efforts in this area. HCAI has programs that provide stipends to behavioral health professionals including those that choose to work in FQHCs. Today, many of California's students who are studying to become behavioral health providers and who can provide post-graduate services at certain facilities, receive financial support from HCAI's Allied Healthcare Scholarship Program (AHSP).

Additionally, the 2022 Budget includes a \$1.4 billion health care workforce initiative, including \$248 million over five years to increase the number of licensed behavioral health professionals through grants to existing university or college behavioral health professional training programs as well as through stipends, scholarships, and loan repayment. This bill creates a new grant program duplicative of existing programs with millions of dollars a year in ongoing cost pressures not included in the budget.

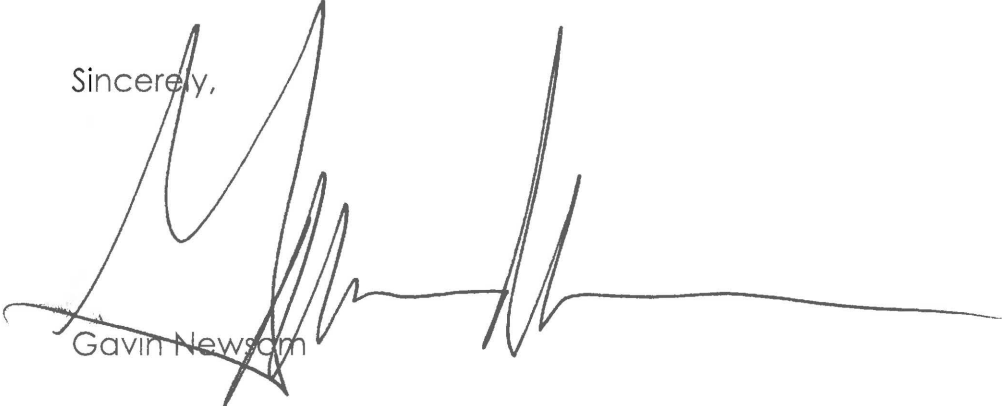


With our state facing lower-than-expected revenues over the first few months of this fiscal year, it is important to remain disciplined when it comes to spending, particularly spending that is ongoing. We must prioritize existing obligations and priorities, including education, health care, public safety and safety-net programs.

The Legislature sent measures with potential costs of well over \$20 billion in one-time spending commitments and more than \$10 billion in ongoing commitments not accounted for in the state budget. Bills with significant fiscal impact, such as this measure, should be considered and accounted for as part of the annual budget process.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive nature of the handwriting.

Gavin Newsom