



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 22 2023

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 957 without my signature.

This legislation would require a court, when determining the best interests of a child in a child custody or visitation proceeding, to consider, among other comprehensive factors, a parent's affirmation of the child's gender identity or gender expression.

I appreciate the passion and values that led the author to introduce this bill. I share a deep commitment to advancing the rights of transgender Californians, an effort that has guided my decisions through many decades in public office.

That said, I urge caution when the Executive and Legislative branches of state government attempt to dictate – in prescriptive terms that single out one characteristic – legal standards for the Judicial branch to apply. Other-minded elected officials, in California and other states, could very well use this strategy to diminish the civil rights of vulnerable communities.

Moreover, a court, under existing law, is required to consider a child's health, safety, and welfare when determining the best interests of a child in these proceedings, including the parent's affirmation of the child's gender identity.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", is written over the printed name. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "G" and a long, horizontal tail stroke.