



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 25 2024

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 26 without my signature.

This bill would require the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) to create and administer the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Scholarship Program, to increase the number of culturally competent licensed marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, professional clinical counselors, and psychologists.

While I support the author's goal to advance the CARE Act and address behavioral health provider shortages, this program is duplicative of the existing scholarship and loan forgiveness programs under HCAI, such as the Behavioral Health Scholarship Program. Additionally, this bill would result in General Fund cost pressures in the millions of dollars and should be considered in the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.



For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'G' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom