



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 13 2025

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 485 without my signature.

This bill would allow an appointed county public defender to be removed from office only upon a three-fifths vote of the board of supervisors and a showing of good cause.

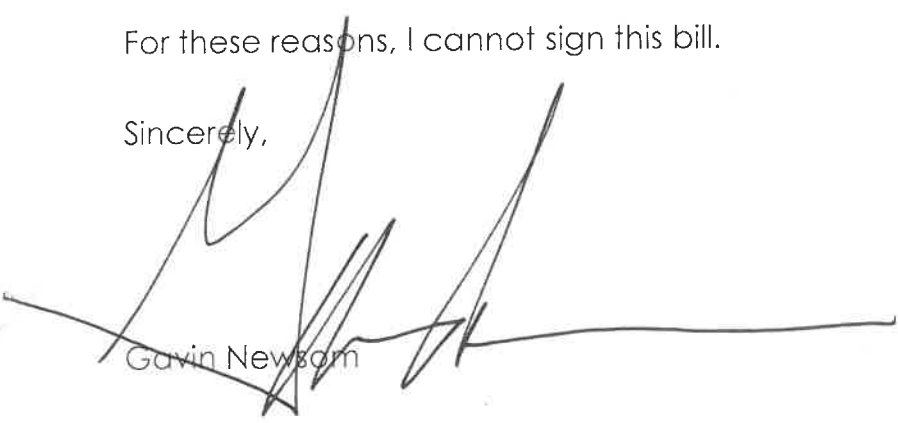
I appreciate the importance of protecting public defenders from undue political interference, as their role sometimes requires taking unpopular positions to fulfill their legal and ethical duties to their clients.

That said, I have not been presented with evidence that California's current system in any way impairs the effectiveness or independence of public defenders. Proponents only cite a handful of examples from other states of public defenders being removed from office for controversial advocacy.

Further, since the law does not place term limits on public defenders, this bill may ultimately make it unduly difficult to replace public defenders for legitimate reasons and leave incumbents entrenched, which I do not support.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom