



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2026

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1608 without my signature.

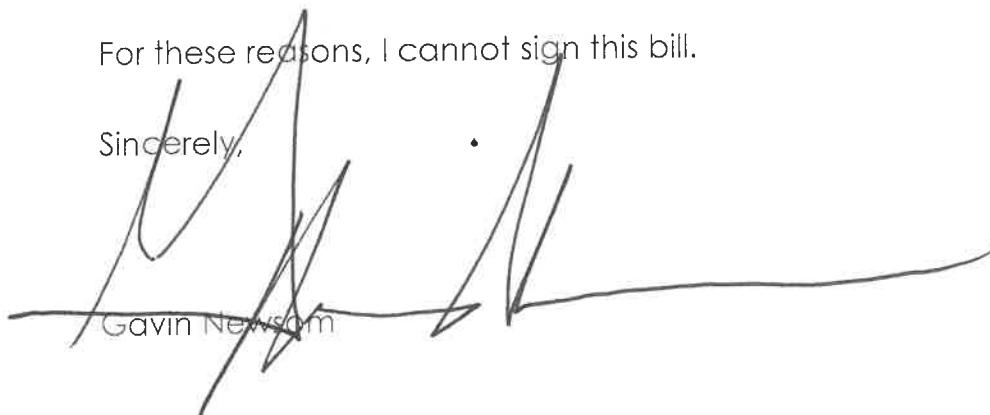
This bill would exempt the Office of the Inspector General (Office) for the California High-Speed Rail Authority from specified state personnel and contracting requirements.

The Office was established in 2022 to strengthen independent oversight and accountability. Earlier this year, we enhanced the Office's authority by enacting budget trailer bill language expanding the Office's ability to protect whistleblowers and safeguard sensitive investigative records while preserving transparency and accountability.

My administration also has continued to support the Office through targeted actions, including a planned increase in its information technology project delegation authority. The Office should continue working with the appropriate state agencies to address its operational needs through existing processes rather than receive broad, permanent exemptions from generally applicable statewide administrative safeguards.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom

