



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 27 2026

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 788 without my signature.

This bill creates the Division of Female Programs and Services (Division) within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), which is solely responsible for female adult institutions and community facilities housing female offenders. The bill also makes changes to the Female Offender Reform Master Plan and creates an ombudsperson position solely assigned to adult female institutions.

I appreciate the author's recognition that incarcerated women face significant unique experiences that demand a different approach to program and policy development. However, this measure would considerably expand the size of the CDCR administration in ways that will duplicate existing work and create organizational dysfunction.

As the size of the state's incarcerated population has declined, my Administration has both closed institutions and worked to reduce the size of the administration of the CDCR. In 2025, the CDCR realigned its leadership structure to consolidate supervision of institutions by region, grouping both women's institutions into one region with the same Associate Director. This is already proving to be a significant step forward in bringing additional attention and resources to the women's institutions. In light of this, creating a new parallel Division within the CDCR to administer only two institutions is not advised. Further, the organizational changes required by this bill would result in increased costs to CDCR that were not considered in the context of this year's budget.

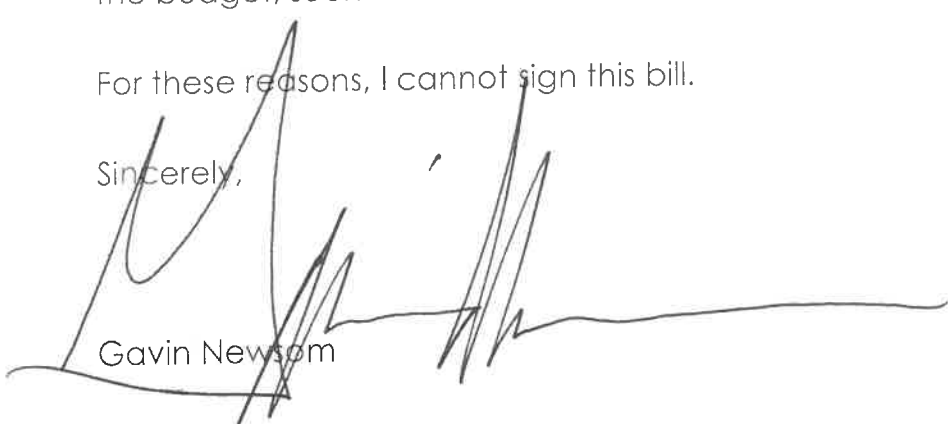


In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that recognizes the challenging fiscal landscape our state faces while maintaining our commitment to working families and our most vulnerable communities. With significant fiscal pressures and the federal government's hostile economic policies, it is vital that we remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over the printed name "Gavin Newsom". The signature is highly fluid and abstract, with long, sweeping strokes that extend across the line of the name and slightly above and below it.