



May 9, 2016

Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara County
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Honorable Supervisors:

Treatment Advocacy Center is a national nonprofit with the mission of working with those at the local, state, and national level to eliminate barriers to treatment for individuals with severe mental illness. We have been contacted by a number of Santa Barbara County citizens who want to see Laura's Law adopted and who are extremely concerned about some inaccurate information that has been asserted on the subject of how the law works and costs associated with it. In anticipation of your hearing on May 10th, please accept this letter as clarification of a few points so that your decision is based on facts and evidence.

- An article appearing in the *Lompoc Record* suggested that costs for the program would run between \$606,866 and \$2,047,692. These figures are wildly out of line with what other counties have found costs to be. I would question what is included in the figures, and whether they include services already being provided (thus double-counting them). In addition, these figures do not include any off-set for savings from lower rates of involuntary hospitalizations, arrests, emergency responder costs, and incarcerations.
- It has been suggested that providing services under a Laura's Law program would require expanding services for voluntary clients. This is not correct. Social services *available* are assessed to determine a treatment plan for an individual, whether voluntary or involuntary. The plan is tailored to the individual and his or her circumstances. The legislation merely specifies that services for voluntary clients or for children's mental health cannot be *reduced* in order to provide services under Laura's Law.
- Contrary to what has been asserted by some, there is no requirement under Laura's Law that supportive housing be provided if none exists. A treatment plan may include assistance in *finding* housing (as is also the case with voluntary clients), but this is not a mandate that housing be provided.

It is a relatively small number of individuals in Santa Barbara County who would be eligible for treatment under Laura's Law. By all accounts, these citizens are not adequately served yet because the system is designed to allow access only to those well enough to seek treatment voluntarily. This is an excellent place to start for a pilot program.

Treatment Advocacy Center has working relationships with a number of counties in California currently developing or implementing Laura's Law programs. We would be happy to provide assistance to Santa Barbara County to ensure a successful program and the best possible outcome for its citizens with severe mental illness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Dailey".

Lisa Dailey, Esq.
Legislative and Policy Counsel
Treatment Advocacy Center
DaileyL@TreatmentAdvocacyCenter.org
Direct: 703-294-6004
200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 801
Arlington, VA 22203