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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Gregg Hart
Member of the Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6230
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2257 (Hart) – Corrections
As introduced 2/19/2026 – Support**

Dear Assembly Member Hart:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors in the County of Santa Barbara, I write in support of AB 2257, your measure to (1) restore the authority of county boards of supervisors to establish a local department of corrections and rehabilitation responsible for operating the county jail system and (2) specify qualifications for the executive officer appointed to lead that department.

AB 2257 would revive and update provisions contained in Government Code section 23013, which from 1957 to 1993 authorized county boards of supervisors to create a local corrections department responsible for the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals housed in county jails and other local adult facilities. Under that framework, all related functions, personnel, and facilities were overseen by an executive officer appointed by the board. Legislation enacted more than 30 years ago (SB 911 – Chapter 1236, Statutes of 1993) repealed this authority effective July 1 of that year, while allowing counties that had already established such departments to maintain the operational model.

Your measure would once again authorize – though not require – county boards of supervisors to establish a local department of corrections and rehabilitation when specific findings are made. Restoring this local option is appropriate given the increasing complexity, cost, and policy impacts associated with custodial operations.

The County of Santa Barbara has long supported criminal justice reforms that advance public safety while promoting rehabilitation, diversion, and successful reentry. The

County's policy platform emphasizes reducing recidivism and strengthening behavioral health and supportive services for justice-involved individuals. By allowing a board of supervisors, when local conditions warrant, to appoint an executive officer other than the sheriff to oversee jail operations, AB 2257 would provide counties with flexibility to better integrate custody operations with broader public safety and rehabilitation goals.

Lastly, local control is a bedrock principle for boards of supervisors. Local authority gives counties the flexibility to design and implement policies that reflect community priorities and the county's fiscal capacity. AB 2257 aligns with the local control principle by restoring the authority counties held prior to 1993 to establish correctional departments separate from Sheriff oversight.

For these reasons, the County of Santa Barbara appreciates your leadership in pursuing AB 2257 and supports this common-sense approach to restoring local governance options for responsible, safe, and effective county jail operations.

Sincerely,

Jean Hurst
Legislative Advocate