

Senate Bill No. 516

Passed the Senate August 26, 2010

Secretary of the Senate

Passed the Assembly August 23, 2010

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2010, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to add Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2200) to Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to the California Youth Legislature.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 516, DeSaulnier. California Youth Legislature.

Existing law establishes the California Senior Legislature to provide model legislation for older citizens and advocate for the needs of seniors. This law establishes in the State Treasury the California Fund for Senior Citizens to receive contributions from tax return designations to support the sessions of the California Senior Legislature. Existing law authorizes individual taxpayers to contribute amounts in excess of their tax liability for the support of specified funds or accounts.

This bill would establish the California Youth Legislature, composed of students ages 14 to 18 years, inclusive, and, subject to specified considerations, to provide model legislation and advocate for the needs of youth. The California Youth Legislature would be charged with examining and discussing policy and fiscal issues affecting the interests, needs, and conditions of the youth of California and with formally advising and making recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on specific issues affecting youth. The bill would create the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee, the members of which would serve without salary, and which would be chaired by the chair of the Joint Committee on Rules and composed of appointed representatives of organizations with expertise on issues facing youths, which, among other duties, would appoint members of the youth legislature. The bill would require the advisory committee to enter into an interagency agreement with the Joint Committee on Rules to carry out necessary administrative functions. The advisory committee also would be charged with determining when there are sufficient funds to support the program and if it determines that there are insufficient funds to cover all costs, the activities of the California Youth Legislature would cease.

The bill would provide that funds for the California Youth Legislature would be allocated from the California Youth Leadership Fund to be created by AB 2017 of the 2009–10 Regular Session, upon appropriation by the Legislature. That fund would be supported by taxpayer designations by individuals of specified amounts in excess of their tax liability. The bill also would authorize the California Youth Legislature to accept gifts and grants from any source to help perform its functions.

The bill would provide that it would become operative only if it and AB 2017 are both enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2011.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2200) is added to Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

CHAPTER 4. CALIFORNIA YOUTH LEGISLATURE

2200. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that the needs of California's youth can best be assessed by California's youth.

(b) The Legislature recognizes that there are over 9,000,000 youths under the age of 19 years in California, and an additional 3,000,000 more young adults between the ages of 18 years and 24 years.

(c) The Legislature recognizes that all young people need five key developmental resources in order to become productive citizens: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to help others. The Legislature further recognizes that young people who receive more of these developmental resources fare better than young people who receive fewer, and that those young people are more likely to avoid violence, contribute to their communities, and achieve high grades in school. The Legislature further recognizes the significant number of California's youth who live disadvantaged lives. Of those youths, an estimated 200,000 minors and thousands more youths ages 18 years to 24 years, inclusive, experience homelessness each year. Another 80,000 youths are in the foster care system, over 2,500 youths in California currently occupy juvenile justice facilities, and more than 3,000 youths are on parole from those

facilities. Youth who are homeless, in the juvenile justice system, or in foster care have limited opportunities to participate in the policy process that ultimately impacts their well-being.

(d) The Legislature recognizes that there are limited civic engagement opportunities for these disconnected and disadvantaged youths, especially opportunities developed and designed for and with them in mind.

(e) The Legislature is alarmed that hundreds of thousands of California youth are among the two-thirds of America's children and youth recently identified by the America's Promise Alliance as not receiving sufficient developmental resources to safely put them on the path to adulthood. The Legislature also is concerned that the high school completion rate is less than 60 percent for low-income students and students of color in California, that gang and youth violence continue to be a concern and although birth rates to teen mothers have decreased, "teen pregnancy and parenting" continues to be a significant social problem in California. The Legislature is encouraged, however, by research indicating that providing more of the five developmental resources for more young people can help prevent many of these problems, and that millions of dollars in later prison, health, and welfare costs can be avoided by providing more developmental resources for more young people now.

(f) The Legislature also agrees with the America's Promise Alliance's call for greater collaboration and integration in working to turn failure into action and improve the lives of young people at risk and with the actions of the more than 20 states that have committed their state resources for the creation of statewide entities charged with improving the developmental well-being of their children and youth.

(g) The California Youth Legislature shall be established through this chapter and shall operate according to the procedures set forth in this chapter to provide model legislation and advocate for the needs of youth.

2201. (a) The California Youth Legislature shall be initially composed of 40 members and shall be expanded to 120 members as funding becomes available, at which time it shall be divided into two houses, the California Youth Senate, composed of 40 members, and the California Youth Assembly, composed of 80 members.

(b) Members of the California Youth Legislature shall serve two-year terms.

(c) Members of the California Youth Legislature shall be ages 14 to 18, inclusive, and currently enrolled in a California junior high, middle, or high school, or participating in a nonpublic, home-based educational program or a general equivalency degree program.

2202. (a) The members of the California Youth Legislature shall be appointed by the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee.

(b) Members of the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee, in making their appointments, shall take into consideration that the members of the California Youth Legislature represent the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, physical, and educational diversity of California. Particular emphasis should be placed on reaching out to at-risk or disadvantaged youth to serve as members of the California Youth Legislature, as their participation will provide keen insight into many of the issues that youth face in their day-to-day lives.

2203. (a) The California Youth Legislature's main policy goal will be to provide meaningful opportunities for actual civic engagement to improve the quality of life for California's disconnected and disadvantaged youth. Furthermore, youths involved with the California Youth Legislature will make meaningful recommendations regarding legislation and policies that impact their own lives and the lives of the thousands of other youths in California whose voices often go unheard.

(b) The California Youth Legislature shall do all of the following:

(1) Examine and discuss policy and fiscal issues affecting the interests, needs, and conditions of the youth of California.

(2) Formally advise and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on specific issues affecting youth, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Education.

(B) Employment.

(C) Access to state and local government services.

(D) The environment.

(E) Behavioral and physical health.

(F) Safety.

- (G) Technology.
- (H) Criminal justice.
- (I) Homelessness.
- (J) Foster care.
- (K) Child welfare.
- (L) Emancipation.
- (M) Financial literacy.
- (N) Substance abuse.
- (O) Driver's license requirements.
- (P) Poverty.
- (Q) Increased youth participation in state and local government.
- (R) Any other policy or fiscal issues deemed appropriate by the California Youth Legislature.

(3) Consult with any existing local level youth advisory commissions and community-based, grassroots youth-led organizations for input and potential solutions on issues related to youth.

(4) To complete its duties, the California Youth Legislature shall convene and conduct meetings according to its bylaws, created by the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee to fulfill the intentions of this chapter.

(c) The California Youth Legislature shall act as an information center on California youth policy and fiscal issues, including, but not limited to, the issues listed in subdivision (b). When available, funds shall be allocated to enable individual youths to travel to the State Capitol to learn the legislative process and, on occasion, to testify at hearings on legislation.

2204. (a) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall be established and shall serve as the advisory board to the California Youth Legislature regarding the development, implementation, and administration of the program as provided in this chapter.

(b) (1) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall be chaired by the chair of the Joint Committee on Rules, or his or her designee. The Joint Committee on Rules shall appoint members of the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee.

(2) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall be composed of, but not limited to, appointed representatives from statewide nonprofit youth organizations, community-based nonprofit organizations that serve youth or youth-related issues,

and an appointed representative of a local educational agency or school district or its appointed designee. The California Health and Human Services Agency may also, but is not required to, appoint a member of the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee.

(3) To ensure that members of the California Youth Legislature have the support they may need given their unique situation, members of the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee must have experience and training working with youths ages 14 to 18 years, inclusive, on the issues described in subdivision (b) of Section 2203 and have special experience in civic engagement and advocacy and at least one of the following issue areas affecting youth:

- (A) Crisis prevention or intervention.
- (B) Drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse prevention or intervention.
- (C) Foster care.
- (D) Juvenile justice.
- (E) Homelessness.
- (F) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights and social justice.
- (G) Mental health.

(c) (1) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall determine the time, location, and number of annual meetings, but shall meet no less than once each year.

(2) The California Youth Legislature shall enter into a mutually agreed-upon interagency agreement with the Joint Committee on Rules to carry out administrative duties related to its program.

(3) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall submit an annual budget and report to the Joint Committee on Rules.

(d) (1) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall determine when there are sufficient funds to support the program. If the committee determines there are insufficient funds to cover all costs, the activities of the California Youth Legislature shall cease.

(2) State funds shall not be used to support the California Youth Legislature except as provided in Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 18736) of Chapter 3 of Part 10.2 of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.

(e) (1) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall develop and provide applications for the California Youth Legislature and collect applications from youths who would like to apply.

(2) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall determine ways to promote the program and make applications available.

(3) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall establish criteria for the selection of youths, collect applications, and make appointments based on the applications submitted and the purposes of this chapter.

(4) The California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall not discriminate based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, age, gender, marital status, sex, or sexual orientation.

(f) The members of the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall serve voluntarily and shall not receive a salary.

2205. (a) The funds for the California Youth Legislature shall be allocated from the California Youth Leadership Fund pursuant to Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 18736) of Chapter 3 of Part 10.2 of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, or from private funds directed to the Joint Committee on Rules and allocated to the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee for the purpose of funding activities of the California Youth Legislature.

(b) The California Youth Legislature may accept gifts and grants from any source, public or private, to help perform its functions, pursuant to this chapter.

(c) No more than 10 percent of the funds allocated to the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee for the purpose of funding activities of the California Youth Legislature may be used for administrative costs.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (c), the California Youth Legislature Advisory Committee shall have the authority to define its program and utilize its funds in any way necessary to carry out the duties of this chapter, including partnering with nonprofit groups or state agencies to perform various duties required by this chapter, as long as the program or activity is not in violation of a state law or regulation.

SEC. 2. This bill shall become operative only if this bill and Assembly Bill 2017 of the 2009–10 Regular Session are both enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2011.

Approved _____, 2010

Governor