

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2228**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Aroner**

February 24, 2000

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An act relating to mental health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2228, as introduced, Aroner. Juvenile offenders: mental health screening.

Existing law, the Arnold-Kennick Juvenile Court Law, provides for the adjudication of a minor as a ward of the juvenile court on the basis of criminal or certain noncriminal behavior.

Existing law also directs county mental health departments that receive specified funding to provide mental health screening, assessment, and other services to the extent resources are available to children served by county social services and probation departments.

This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to provide appropriate screening and assessment of juvenile offenders to detect mental or emotional disorders, and to provide a continuum of appropriate mental health services for juvenile offenders at the local level.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

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

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and  
2 declares all of the following:

3 (a) The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and  
4 Delinquency Prevention estimates that 60 percent of  
5 young people in the juvenile system suffer from  
6 behavioral, mental, or emotional disorders.

7 (b) The National Mental Health Association reports  
8 that, according to data obtained from site visits to a  
9 nationally representative sample of 95 public and private  
10 juvenile facilities, 73 percent of the young people in those  
11 facilities reported mental health problems, and 57  
12 percent reported that they had been previously treated  
13 for mental health problems.

14 (c) The prevalence of mental disorders among young  
15 people in juvenile justice facilities ranges from 50 percent  
16 to 75 percent.

17 (d) From one-quarter to one-third of the young  
18 people suffered from anxiety or mood disorders, nearly  
19 one-third of the girls suffered from posttraumatic stress  
20 syndrome, and up to 19 percent of the young people may  
21 be suicidal.

22 (e) Young people with learning disabilities or serious  
23 emotional problems are arrested at higher rates than  
24 other young people who do not suffer from those  
25 disabilities.

26 (f) Young people involved with the juvenile justice  
27 system have substantially higher rates of mental disorders  
28 than young people in the general population.

29 (g) Many young people involved in the juvenile  
30 justice system in California suffer from mental health  
31 problems, substance abuse problems, and other problems  
32 that frequently are undiagnosed or untreated due to the  
33 lack of proper screening and assessment or the  
34 unavailability of appropriate treatment resources.

35 (h) The Legislature recognizes the value of  
36 comprehensive strength-based assessments and  
37 coordination of appropriate services for young people



1 and their families, including intensive followup to ensure  
2 the availability and accessibility of services.

3 Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to enact  
4 legislation that will provide appropriate screening and  
5 assessment of juvenile offenders to detect mental or  
6 emotional disorders, and to provide a continuum of  
7 appropriate mental health services for juvenile offenders  
8 at the local level.

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