



August 9, 2017

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 190 (Mitchell): Juvenile fees
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Gonzalez Fletcher:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation SB 190 (Mitchell), which is currently in your committee. This bill would prohibit the collection of administrative fees from minors in the juvenile justice system and their families.

The overwhelming majority of California counties currently charge administrative fees to the families of minors in the juvenile justice system. These fees, meant to offset the costs of youth detention and supervision, in reality are so costly to collect that counties often see no financial benefits from the practice. These fees also have a disproportionate effect on families living in poverty, who are more likely to have a child detained by the juvenile justice system. These families cannot afford to pay fees that sometimes run into the thousands of dollars, when they may not even have sufficient funds for food, shelter, or other necessities. By exacerbating these families' financial difficulties, housing instability, and food insecurity, these fees stand to provoke so-called "toxic stress" in parents and children alike, a form of severe chronic stress with highly detrimental effects to emotional and physical health. It bears noting that highly stressful home environments have been linked to drug use, school truancy, and other issues that may in turn cause run-ins with the juvenile justice system.

SB 190 (Mitchell) would end the vicious cycle created by juvenile administrative fees by prohibiting their assessment. This would help families living in poverty provide for their children while coping with the legal consequences of a young loved one's detention, and would allow collection expenses to be redirected to preventive programs that reduce crime by helping families and children escape poverty.

Pediatricians urge an AYE vote on SB 190 (Mitchell). We thank you for your public service and for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends towards the upper right.

Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: The Honorable Holly Mitchell; Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee; Kris Calvin, CEO, AAP-CA;
AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne