

## **COMMONWEAL**

### **The Juvenile Justice Program**

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### **Senate President Darrell Steinberg seeks to renew Mentally Ill Offender Grants for California justice-system youth**

Senate President Pro-Tem Darrell Steinberg has introduced SB 1054, proposing to renew the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) grant program with a \$50 million appropriation for FY 14-15. MIOCR grants, suspended since 2008, previously supported a range of in-custody and community-based mental health services for juvenile and adult offenders.

SB 1054 would re-establish the MIOCR grant program through the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). In 2012 BSCC replaced the Corrections Standards Authority which awarded and monitored prior rounds of MIOCR grants.

Though details are yet to be defined as to the eligibility for competitive grants and the types of services that can be funded, the “new” MIOCR-Juvenile grants are expected to support a range of best-practices such as youth Mental Health Courts, validated assessment and diagnostic tools for detained juveniles, collaborative case management models and other effective and evidence-based approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of confined and probation-supervised youth.

There is widespread evidence that too many children with mental health disorders are confined in local juvenile justice facilities in California, without adequate diagnostic, treatment and follow up services. Nearly half of the juveniles in county detention and probation facilities have “open mental health cases”, according to the most recent facility data published by the Board of State and Community Corrections. (Juvenile Detention Profile Survey, First Quarter 2013, [bssc.ca.gov](http://bssc.ca.gov)).

In a December press conference convened by Senator Steinberg to announce the MIOCR renewal, speakers from law enforcement and mental health endorsed his proposal. Los Angeles County Mental Health Director Marv Southard said: "Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grants incentivize partnerships between law enforcement and treatment that make recovery more likely and possible. Under Senator Steinberg's leadership, safer communities and appropriate, cost effective solutions will happen." -

Under the proposal, funding for new MIOCR grant program would come from the Recidivism Reduction Fund set up under last year's SB 105. SB 105 makes available state savings from adult prison realignment for various recidivism reduction programs. In February, a federal court extended California's deadline for reaching court-mandated prison

population reduction targets, freeing up SB 105 funds that would otherwise have been spent on swift shuffling of current prisoners to jails and other-state facilities. Nevertheless, competition for these available funds in the Capitol is already intense, and the Governor's FY 14-15 budget has already proposed spending \$ 81 million in recidivism reduction funds on other inmate and re-entry programs. It remains to be seen how the Legislature will respond to Steinberg's request to use SB 105 funds as a prime source for the new round of MIOCR grants.

SB 1054 is tentatively set for a first hearing in the Senate Public Safety Committee on April 22. For more information on the Senator's proposal, go to:

<http://sd06.senate.ca.gov/news/2013-12-19-steinberg-announces-mentally-ill-offender-crime-reduction-grant-program>.

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