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Organization Founded by the Sheriffs in 1894

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June 20, 2017

The Honorable Susan Eggman
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: AB 186 – Oppose

Dear Assembly Member Eggman:

On behalf of the California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA), I regret to inform you that we remain opposed to your measure, Assembly Bill 186, which would authorize specified local governments to permit the operation of "safer drug consumption programs" for adults, and would exempt certain persons and entities from criminal liability for offenses related to controlled substances possession and consumption.

Existing law prohibits the possession of specified controlled substances. Statute additionally prohibits the possession of drug paraphernalia, being in a location where controlled substances are being used, and being under the influence of controlled substances. AB 186 would exempt specified persons from criminal liability for these offenses in order to permit local governments to allow the operation of "safer drug consumption programs."

Controlled substances and the commerce that facilitates their availability pose significant danger to those who consume them and their communities. While attempting to create a safe place to use drugs, this bill effectively permits government-sanctioned drug dens where health and other officials will oversee the "lawful" use of controlled substances. This sends entirely the wrong message regarding drug use and likely creates civil liability issues for participating governments and officials. While criminal liability might be off the table, it would only be a matter of time before a participating agency is sued when a drug user overdoses or an innocent person is killed by someone driving away from the facility while under the influence.

Despite the amendments limiting the scope of the bill, and for the reasons stated above, CSSA must respectfully oppose AB 186.

Sincerely,

Cory M. Salzillo
Legislative Director