

DPSFV.com

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

June 14, 2021

RE: DPSFV Supports H.R. 2834 by Congressman Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)

Representatives of the Honorable San Fernando Valley Delegation:

On behalf of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley (DPSFV), we are pleased to report that our Executive Board voted to support H.R. 2834 which requires parents to be notified when a child is arrested and requires that the child consult with legal counsel before they can waive their Constitutional Rights and be subject to custodial interrogation. We strongly urge you to support H.R. 2834.

DPSFV was founded in 1978 and is chartered by the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee. Our organization is the coordinating body for a coalition of twenty-one Democratic Clubs located in the six Assembly Districts (38, 39, 43, 45, 46, and 50) which are wholly or partially in the San Fernando Valley.

The DPSFV Political Action Committee met last month to discuss H.R. 2834 and voted to recommend that the DPSFV E-Board support this vital piece of legislation. The committee noted that in 2020, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 203 (Bradford) which mandates all California youth talk with an attorney before deciding whether or not to waive their rights and submit to police interrogation. H.R. 2834 would help to extend this important protection to all children in the United States.

Too often the criminal justice system fails to respond in a trauma-informed and age-appropriate way to children engaged in the justice system. The vast majority of children involved in the criminal justice system are contending with early childhood trauma and unmitigated Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse; witnessing domestic violence; living with family members who are substance abusers, suffer from mental illness or suicidal ideation, or are incarcerated. Studies have shown that approximately 90 percent of children in the juvenile justice system have experienced at least two ACEs, and 27 percent of boys and 45 percent of girls have experienced at least five ACEs. For children sentenced to life in prison, nearly 80 percent of them reported witnessing violence in their homes, 50 percent were physically abused, and 20 percent were sexually abused during their life. However, the justice system rarely recognizes or understands the connection between children who have committed a criminal act and their previous exposure to trauma.

The lack of regard for child status and the failure to account for the impact of early childhood trauma in children transferred into the adult criminal justice system violates children's human rights and perpetuates systemic inequities – especially for Black, Hispanic, and Native American youth and youth from low socio-economic backgrounds who make up the vast majority of children harmed by the justice system. Black children comprise 58 percent of all children confined in adult prisons. Roughly 83 percent of children prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system are racial minorities, where black children represent 87 percent of drug cases, 48 percent of property cases, and 63 percent of public order offense cases.

We urge you to support H.R. 2834.

Please note that DPSFV will be tracking this bill as it travels through the Legislature. Your voting record will be noted and may be considered should you ever seek our endorsement. Your office is always welcome to contact DPSFV if you have any questions.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Chair Sean M. Rivas
Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley

cc: Congressional Members Sherman, Cárdenas (author), Lieu, and Schiff
U.S. Senators Feinstein and Padilla

PO Box 57259, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 818-995-DEMS (3367)