



April 11, 2021

RE: DPSFV Supports Senate Bill 262 [Bail Reform]

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 SB 262, which creates a more fair pretrial justice system and ends unnecessary pretrial incarceration. This bill represents a critical step forward in securing Californians' rights to the presumption of innocence and due process after being accused of a crime. SB 262 also protects Californians against many of the nefarious and predatory practices carried out by the state's money bail industry.

We urge you to please support this important piece of legislation.

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 SB 262 and voted to recommend that the DPSFV Executive Board support this vital piece of legislation. The committee noted that, in California, 97% of people who make bail use a bail agent and pay a non-refundable fee for their freedom. For most, this is not a simple transaction. People often have to borrow from friends and family, enter into exploitative financing schemes, or put up their property – even their homes – as collateral. Regardless of whether a case is dismissed, or charges are not ultimately filed after an arrest, the bail company keeps its premium. Despite this plain inequity, the only alternative is worse: being stuck in jail could mean losing a job, missing rent payments, losing custody of a child or ultimately pleading guilty when innocent just to get home and prevent these harms.

This alternative is a reality for too many Californians. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, on any given day, 63% or roughly 46,000 people in California jails are awaiting trial or sentencing. This presents staggering costs not only for people accused and their families, but for local governments, which pay an average of \$100 per day to hold someone pending trial. The Pretrial Justice Institute reports that the cost of supervising a person in the community while pending trial is about 10% of the cost of keeping them in jail. With data showing that the vast majority of people released pretrial do not reoffend, and that very little is needed to ensure they show up to court on time, these costs – both human and financial – are unjustifiable.

We urge you to support SB 262.

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: Assembly Members Rivas, Friedman, Gabriel, Nazarian, and Bloom
Senators Hertzberg (Author), Portantino, Stern and Allen

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