



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2018

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am signing Senate Bill 1391, which would prohibit the prosecution of 14 and 15 year olds as adults.

This is a difficult bill. By definition, any 14 or 15 year old that a District Attorney seeks to prosecute as an adult has been accused of very serious crimes. The opposition of certain crime victims and their families to this measure is intense. I have carefully listened to that opposition and it has weighed on me.

I have also studied the case examples, research and data, as well as the legislative history and specific statutes relevant to this bill. All of these factors were important to consider in making the decision to sign this bill, as well as the stark racial and geographic disparity in how young men and women are treated who have committed similar crimes.

Additionally, in reviewing this bill I have considered the fact that young people adjudicated in juvenile court can be held beyond their original sentence if necessary. Welfare and Institutions code sections 1800 and 1800.5 allow either the Director of the Division of Juvenile Justice, or the Board of Juvenile Hearings, to petition for extended incarceration if a youth is deemed truly dangerous. This mechanism exists under current law, and has been used in the past when circumstances have warranted. It will continue to be used when needed, and there are no time limits prescribed in statute.

There is a fundamental principle at stake here: whether we want a society which at least attempts to reform the youngest offenders before consigning them to adult prisons where their likelihood of becoming a lifelong criminal is so much higher.

My view is that we should continue to work toward a more just system that respects victims, protects public safety, holds youth accountable, and also seeks a path of redemption and reformation wherever possible.

Sincerely,



Edmund G. Brown Jr.