



County of Monterey

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Sonia M. De La Rosa

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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September 10, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 366 (Petrie-Norris) County human services agencies: workforce development. – Signature Request

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am pleased to support AB 366 by Assembly Member Petrie-Norris and respectfully urge your signature on this bill, which would reduce barriers to address significant workforce shortages in county human services agencies.

Across the state, county human service agencies are facing critical staffing shortages across all program areas. Competition for staff is fierce across programs and services as well as the private sector and across county lines. Rapid turnover of critical staff undermines the quality of services provided to consumers of programs, impedes progress for refining practices, and may result in fiscal sanctions in some situations, i.e., federal Child and Family Service Reviews. Staffing shortages are present in urban counties struggling with high caseloads and rural counties that have an extremely small pool of qualified candidates, which impacts the whole state, and will not improve unless meaningful action is taken to expand the workforce.

In the County of Monterey, the most challenging positions to fill include Masters' Level Social Workers (SW IV/V), Eligibility Workers, and Public Health Nurses, which is consistent with findings from the Bay Area Social Service Consortium's Workforce Study report. The challenge, under the current structure, for the County's Department of Social Services (DSS) is that it is unable to fairly compete with local hospitals, like Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, and non-merit County of Monterey departments, such as the Health Department, for Masters' Level Social Workers. Local hospitals and the Health Department can hire social workers at a much faster pace, while DSS is subject to a process of screening applications through the CalHR Merit System before beginning the hiring process. Non-merit employers are free to engage in same day hiring events and more robust recruitment directly targeting applicants interested in working in DSS. Thus, by the time DSS receives the eligible list from CalHR, new graduates have already accepted positions.

AB 366 would allow counties who use the state-administered Merit System for job applications to use an alternative test, known as an Education and Experience examination, to screen applicants and establish eligibility for recruitment of new staff, and advance existing staff. This examination is similar to those already used in state hiring. This measure will help expedite hiring by using a simplified examination process while still ensuring that new workers are qualified.

In all, AB 366 would ensure that vital social services programs continue to operate effectively for those most in need. For these reasons, I urge your signature on this bill.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonia M. De La Rosa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and 'D'.

Sonia M. De La Rosa
County Administrative Officer

cc: The Honorable Anna Caballero, 14th Senate District
The Honorable John Laird, 17th Senate District
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29th Assembly District
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30th Assembly District
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)