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March 22, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O St., 5650  
Sacramento, CA 95814**RE: OPPOSE, AB 78 (Ward) Grand Juries**

Dear Chairman Holden,

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I write to inform you that we must respectfully oppose AB 78, which would increase the per diem compensation rate for individuals selected to serve as County Grand Jurors to make it economically viable for more interested parties to participate.

While the ideals expounded in AB 78 – making grand juries a body that is truly representative of the county's demographics are well placed, upon implementation the problematic nature of AB 78 would be seen, as it would impose considerable costs on county governments. This is due to the fact that AB 78 asks counties to bear the costs, with no additional funding being provided.

County personnel and staff work already work within incredibly tight budgets, and with the economic outlook declining month over month, it does not appear that there will be any financial relief to counties appearing any time soon. While the state is experiencing a revenue shortfall after gains that have exceeded expectations and historical precedent year after year, in most counties, per capita revenues have never recovered from the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009, in real dollars.

Furthermore, AB 78 is economically infeasible because the bill would raise the per diem rate for grand jurors to be equal to 70% of the county median daily income for each day's attendance to open up the jury pool from which they were selected. While Solano County appreciates and understands the desire to encourage increased diversity on grand juries, the county is opposed to AB 78 because it lacks a mechanism to cover what the California State Association of Counties estimates could be \$17.6 million in new and unanticipated county general fund costs. It is important to note this is a low end estimate, and costs could be considerably higher given that (1) CSAC's estimate reflects a conservative projection of the number of meetings per county; (2) it assumes the bill language does not expand the number of days the stipend applies to and (3) it assumes that the number of grand jury meetings will remain static. Further, CSAC's estimate is based on information reported by counties on civil grand juries only, although the bill would also apply to criminal grand juries. Ergo by raising the per diem rate for grand jurors, the economic burden of paying the jurors will also be shifted to counties, because as already stated AB 78 is an unfunded mandate.

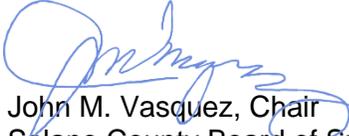
While there is a need to address bias and the lack of diversity in all parts of the legal system, AB 78 would do more harm than good. For the reasons outlined above, the Solano County Board of Supervisors must respectfully oppose AB 78.

Honorable Chris Holden

March 22, 2022

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Sincerely,



John M. Vasquez, Chair  
Solano County Board of Supervisors

**CC:**

The Honorable Bill Dodd, Senator

The Honorable Lori D. Wilson, Assemblymember

The Honorable Christopher Ward, Assemblymember

Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Solano County Board of Supervisors

Bernadette Curry, Solano County Counsel

Karen Lange, SYASL Partners