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June 22, 2023

The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee  
1021 O St., Ste. 7330  
Sacramento, CA 95814**RE: OPPOSE, AB 701 (Villapudua) Controlled substances: fentanyl**

Dear Chairwoman Wahab,

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I write in to inform you we must respectfully oppose AB 701, which would apply the existing weight enhancements that increase the penalty and fine for trafficking substances containing heroin, cocaine base, and cocaine to fentanyl.

Relying on increasing penalties for drug offenses has been extensively researched, and we can therefore make some educated predictions about the outcome of bills like AB 701, including that it would not reduce the distribution of fentanyl or prevent overdoses. Additionally, we predict the bill would not reduce the supply of drugs or the demand for them; and worse, could discourage effective methods of dealing with the opioid crisis.

The unintended consequences of using jails and prisons to deal with a public health issue will take decades to unravel. Criminalizing people who sell and use drugs amplifies the risk of fatal overdoses and diseases, increases stigma and marginalization, and drives people away from needed treatment, health, and harm reduction services.

Another concern is County jails are not equipped to handle an influx this bill would likely produce. Further, passage of AB 701 would also go against other state proposals designed at helping close prisons that are no longer needed as the amount of unused beds in prisons continue to rise. California voters have signaled, again and again, their preference for using a health approach to drug offenses. It is for these reasons and more that Solano County must respectfully oppose AB 474.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of John M. Vasquez, written in a cursive style.

John M. Vasquez, Chair  
Solano County Board of Supervisors**CC:**Members, Senate Public Safety Committee  
The Honorable Carlos Villapudua, Assemblymember  
The Honorable Bill Dodd, Senator  
The Honorable Lori D. Wilson, Assemblymember  
The Honorable Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Karen Lange, SYASL Partners