



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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August 18, 2022

Honorable Steve Bradford, Chair Senate
Public Safety Committee
1020N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Anna Caballero, Chair
Senate Governance and Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1608 (Gibson & Weber) County Officers: Consolidation of Offices – Opposition

Dear Assemblymember/Chair Bradford and Assemblymember/ Chair Caballero,

On behalf of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, I write to express our opposition to AB1608, which seeks to remove county authority to combine the duties of the Sheriff and of the Coroner.

Currently, Humboldt County has a consolidated office of the Sheriff and Coroner as a single elected official. This is administratively and fiscally efficient for our rural county. AB 1608 strikes the authority of any Board of Supervisors to combine the duties of the county office by way of ordinance. The proposed change would create significant costs and remove the existing authority of this elected body.

As currently drafted, AB 1608 is problematic because the language of the bill lacks clarity on what is expected of counties. Specific concerns include the requirement for becoming a Coroner. The lack of clarity in the language of the bill also does not delineate if the separation will make the duties of the Coroner a function of the city or the county. As currently drafted, a county is permitted to consolidate the functions and duties of the coroner with other county offices, such as the public administrator. This example would require widespread changes with regards to staffing, resources, security, and physical space. It is of our opinion that a separation of the duties and functions between the Sheriff and the Coroner would do more harm than good.

We believe that the county's elected Board of Supervisors is the most appropriate body to evaluate the operations and fiscal impacts regarding these positions. In Humboldt, the current elected Sheriff/Coroner is already servicing the needs of the community and the county. We support this current structure and therefore respectfully opposes AB1608.

Sincerely,

Virginia Bass, Chair
County of Humboldt'

Cc: Honorable Mike Gipson, California State Assembly
Honorable Dr. Akilah Weber, MD, California State Assembly
Honorable James Gallagher, California State Assembly
Honorable Megan Dahle, California State Assembly
Honorable James Nielsen, California State Assembly
Paul Yoder, Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, Schmeizer & Lange Inc.
Rural County Representative of California
California State Association of Counties