



Southern California Providers for Health Equity

Governor Gavin Newsom

1303 10th Street, Suite 1173

Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 3228 Private Detention Facilities (Bonta)

Dear Governor Newsom,

September 11, 2020

We write to you as a group of physicians concerned with the health and medical care of vulnerable individuals who are incarcerated and detained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In particular we are writing to express our profound concern over the health of those detained in private immigrant detention facilities in the state of California, based on the threat posed by COVID-19. At this time COVID-19 is present in all four ICE detention facilities in California, with growing concern that it will soon result in deaths for those detained as well as a spike in cases in surrounding communities.

Private detention facilities in the state of California pose a unique and critical challenge with respect to public health, and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is well documented that private prisons create conditions that are less safe for those in detention, as well as staff. During a pandemic in which the actions of a few can impact the well-being of so many, accountability for private prison operators is paramount.

AB 3228 would allow individuals harmed by private corporations in immigrant detention to hold them accountable in our state courts. We need to provide this avenue for justice for the most vulnerable members of our community.

We applaud all that your administration has done to protect immigrants in California, and the oversight the Attorney General has exercised in these facilities through AB 103. While we understand that the issue of immigration detention is outside of your jurisdiction, California does have clear authority to protect the health and safety of those within its borders, including those inside private detention facilities.

We believe that AB 3228 provides an important avenue through which individuals who have been harmed. Therefore, we urge you to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Southern California Providers for Health Equity (SCoPHE)