



April 5, 2011

The Honorable Leland Y. Yee, Ph. D.  
State Capitol Room 4074  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: SB 9 (Yee) Sentencing.  
As Introduced December 6, 2010 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Yee:

On behalf of the California Mental Health Directors Association (CMHDA), which represents the directors of public mental health authorities in counties throughout California, I am pleased to support your bill, SB 9, which would authorize an inmate who was sentenced to life without parole as a non-violent juvenile offender to submit a petition of recall and resentencing to the sentencing court and to the prosecuting agency.

SB 9 holds youth offenders responsible for their actions, and recognizes that juvenile offenders sentenced to life without parole should have the chance to prove they deserve a resentencing hearing after serving 10, 15, 20, or 25 years. The United States is currently the only country in the world that imposes life sentences without parole for youth under 18 years of age. California should lead the nation in changing its laws to reflect our contemporary understanding of adolescent brain development and their potential for rehabilitation.

For these reasons, we are in strong support of SB 9 and thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Barlow  
Associate Director, Legislation and Public Policy