

**It's time for California to end the transfer of
14- and 15-year-old youth to the adult criminal system!**

Be a part of passing this bill!

Here are three different support letters for SB 1391.

**The Senate Public Safety Committee needs to hear from you!
Please pick a letter, sign, and send it.**

You can print them and

- ⇒ Choose the one you like best and sign it;
- ⇒ Give them to friends and family members to sign;
- ⇒ Print bunch of sets and bring them to your church or other group to get people to sign in support. (Suggestion: Don't leave it to others to send their letters in. Collect them and send them in yourself!)

How to submit your letter:

1. Human Rights Watch will send the letter for you: Send us your letter, and we'll get it to your Senator. You can send it to Human Rights Watch via fax (310-477-4622) or by email (send to estrادل@hrw.org with the subject line: "SB 1391 support letters.")

OR

2. Fax it to Senator Lara, Atten: Michelle: (916) 651-4933;

**SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS FOR THE SENATE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via facsimile

SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1391

Dear Senate Public Safety Committee Chair,

I support Senate Bill 1391 (SB 1391) which would end the transfer to adult court of children 14 and 15 years of age. The children affected by S.B. 1391 are really young – often still in middle school. I strongly believe when youth commit crimes, they are less likely to commit crimes in the future if they are given age-appropriate services and education available in the juvenile system.

Our laws should recognize that 14- and 15-year-olds are developmentally different and should not be treated like adults in the criminal justice system. They are not even old enough to drive a car, and yet our current law allows them to be sentenced to decades in state prison. S.B. 1391 is consistent with modern research on adolescent development and brain science. We know now that the brain is not fully developed until the mid-twenties, and that many of the impulsive, risk-taking behaviors of young teenagers reflect developmental stages that most will pass through in a few years.

California only began to allow transfer of 14- and 15-year-olds beginning in 1994 – in a “get tough” era fueled by widespread, later discredited fears about violent juveniles. S.B. 1391 would help to restore a more sensible balance to our laws that recognizes that younger children simply should not be handled in the adult system.

For these reasons, I support S.B. 1391, and ask that you support this important piece of legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch (fax: 310-477-4622)

Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via facsimile

Senate Bill 1391: Please support this bill

Dear Senate Public Safety Committee Chair,

I support Senate Bill 1391, which would end the transfer to adult court of children 14 and 15 years of age. A 14-year-old is not an adult. Neither is a 15-year-old. Yet California can send youth age 14 or 15 to the adult criminal court where they face adult sentences, including life in prison.

Young people are different from adults, and our laws should treat them differently, even if the underlying crime is very serious. Research shows that young people fare better and are less likely to commit crimes in the future when they are not sent to the adult criminal court. This bill would require California's youngest teens be kept in the juvenile system. In the juvenile system, these young people are required to receive the same necessary education services provided to all children, as well as individualized services to address behavioral health, disabilities, trauma and other needs.

California only began to allow transfer of 14- and 15-year-olds beginning in 1994—in a “get tough” era fueled by widespread, later discredited fears about violent juveniles. California should be leading the way on smart criminal justice, not lagging behind. Please support SB 1391.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch (fax: 310-477-4622)

Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Please support S.B. 1391

Dear Senate Public Safety Committee Chair,

I support S.B. 1391, and I urge you to support this bill. We know now that teens and young adults are still maturing. This is confirmed by common sense and by the experience of anyone who has spent time with young people. The children affected by S.B. 1391 are really young – often still in middle school. They are not even old enough to drive a car, and yet our current law allows them to be sentenced to decades in state prison. Many of them have unmet needs in relation to abuse, disabilities, behavioral health issues, and poverty. They are disproportionately youth of color. They don't have to be (and they should not be) defined by one incident from their youth. It's just wrong to take 14- and 15-year-olds and throw them into the adult justice system without a chance to rehabilitate.

Obviously, even young people have to be held accountable when they commit crimes. SB 1391 does this. In the juvenile system, these young people are required to receive the same compulsory education services provided to all children, as well as individualized services to address behavioral health, disabilities, trauma and other needs. Teenagers are uniquely equipped to change and rehabilitate. SB 1391 is the right thing to do and will be good for California.

I thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

cc: Human Rights Watch (via fax, 310-477-4622)

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email