



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
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June 29, 2021

Hon. Mark Stone, Chair
Assembly Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 3146
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Senate Bill 507 (Eggman), as amended June 28, 2021 – Support, if amended.
Hearing: Assembly Judiciary Committee – July 6, 2021

Dear Assembly Member Stone:

The Judicial Council is pleased to support SB 507 if amended, which among other things, requires that the findings required by the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Demonstration Program of 2002 (commonly known as Laura's Law, include that the person's condition is substantially deteriorating, or that assisted outpatient treatment is needed to prevent a relapse or deterioration that would be likely to result in grave disability or serious harm to the person or to others.

The Judicial Council supports SB 507 because it can provide individuals who receive treatment through AOT programs the support needed to avoid involvement with the criminal justice system. In doing so the bill will help relieve pressure on criminal courts and collaborative justice courts, where such individuals often find themselves involved with the criminal justice system, including through diversion programs, mental health treatment courts, or proceedings determining whether they are incompetent to stand trial. Further the bill will provide additional information to courts reviewing petitions for AOT that will inform their decisions about whether to order AOT in any given case.

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Turning to the requested amendments, the council respectfully requests that SB 507 be amended to clarify that “videoconferencing” is at the court’s discretion and that the term be changed to use language that is technology neutral. Specifically, the council requests the bill be amended consistent with the following:

The person who is the subject of the petition shall maintain the right to appear before the court in person, but may appear by videoconferencing means if they choose to do so, however, the person may request to appear at the hearing remotely and a court may conduct the proceedings, in whole or in part, remotely through the use of remote technology.

The requested amendments preserve judicial discretion to deny a request to appear remotely when appropriate, including when the court lacks the technology to conduct the hearing remotely. Further the requested amendments recognize that technology evolves over time; broader language, as opposed to the limiting term “video-conference” that is currently used in the bill, will allow the statute to remain current as technology evolves.

For these reasons the Judicial Council is pleased to support SB 507, if amended.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Sharon Reilly in our office at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,

Mailed June 29, 2021

Cory T. Jaspersen
Director, Governmental Affairs

CJ/SR/lb

cc: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Hon. Susan Talamantes Eggman, Member of the Senate
Ms. Angie Wei, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
Mr. Martin Hoshino, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California