

# California State Assembly



## Informational Hearing Agenda

### Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 6 on Public Safety

Assemblymember James Ramos, Chair

Monday, March 24, 2025  
2:30 P.M. – State Capitol, Room 447

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**Public Comment will be taken in person after the completion of all panels and any discussion from the Members of the Subcommittee.**

## Items To Be Heard

### 2720 – California Highway Patrol

#### Issue 1: Overview of the Department and Surge Operations to support Local Jurisdictions to Address Crime, including Organized Retail Theft

The California Highway Patrol will provide an overview of their department and recent surge operations supporting various jurisdictions in the state to address crime, including organized retail theft.

#### Panel

- Robin Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, California Highway Patrol
- Tye Meeks, Special Representative to the Legislature, California Highway Patrol
- Matthew Macedo, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Kathy McCloud, Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance

#### Background

The California Highway Patrol<sup>1</sup> was first established in 1929 to provide uniform traffic law enforcement throughout the state. As the statewide law enforcement agency, the CHP also performs law enforcement duties arising from their primary responsibility and also support other law enforcement agencies in relevant operations and investigations as appropriate. In recent years, the state has funded CHP to establish an organized retail theft taskforce, which was first funded in 2019 and expanded in 2021. According to a press release from the Governor's Office on December 27, 2024, the taskforce has recovered \$51.3 million in stolen property since its inception, with over \$13 million recovered in 2024 alone.

This past year, the CHP has also assisted local jurisdictions and retailers with a number of “surge operations” to assist local law enforcement agencies in increasing law enforcement presence, crime suppression, and investigations in a broad array of crimes, including sideshows, street racing, gun violence, impaired vehicle operations, and illicit drug activity. Surge operations have assisted cities like Oakland, Bakersfield, and San Bernardino. Oakland's surge operations (launched February 2024) have resulted in 1,580 arrests, of which 447 were felony arrests, the recovery of 2,883 stolen vehicles, and 159 illicit firearms were taken off the street. In Bakersfield (launched April 2024), there were 2,518 arrests, of which 550 were felony arrests, the recovery of 940 stolen vehicles, and 73 illicit firearms were seized. In San Bernardino (launched October 2024), there were 454 arrests, of which 77 were felony arrests, the recovery of 40 stolen vehicles and 18 illicit firearms were seized. In addition, surge operations also included a statewide “holiday blitz” in 2024 to focus on retail theft from San Diego all the way to the Bay Area during the holiday season.

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<sup>1</sup> The CHP is generally heard in Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 as part of Transportation.

CHP estimates that 20 additional officers during a surge operation costs approximately \$20,000 at a reimbursable overtime rate of \$129.39 per hour, for each officer, for an 8-hour detail. Surge operations typically are conducted as part of a mutual aid request.

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 2: Child Sexual Abuse Investigations**

The California Highway Patrol will provide an overview of their budget proposal related to child sexual abuse investigations.

**Panel**

- Robin Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, California Highway Patrol
- Tye Meeks, Special Representative to the Legislature, California Highway Patrol
- Matthew Macedo, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Kathy McCloud, Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance

**Background**

According to CHP, the Computer Crimes Investigation Unit (CCIU) has seen a 22% increase in Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) cases based on total case numbers from 2022 through 2024. The types of cases have varied to include cases that have only required 3 to 4 hours of workload, for forensics related assistance, to a complete CSAM investigation that may take several months. In 2022, CCIU investigators were the primary case agents on 4 CSAM investigations (3 resulting in convictions) in 2022, 10 cases (9 resulting in convictions) in 2023 and 25 cases (22 resulting in convictions) in 2024. The convictions (34 of 38 total cases) comprise CHP’s 90% success rate for CSAM investigations. These types of cases represented approximately 3% of the total CCIU cases in 2024. According to CHP, while these cases make 3% of the overall total CCIU cases, 15-20% of the overall CCIU’s time is dedicated to CSAM investigations.

**Governor’s Budget Proposal**

The Governor’s Budget requests \$5.0 million ongoing General Fund and twelve positions that will be assigned to the CHP Computer Crimes Investigation Unit to assist in combatting Child Sexual Abuse Material and Human Trafficking throughout California.

**Staff Comments**

Currently, CHP has one representative who is part of the Sacramento Valley Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce (ICAC). The Subcommittee may wish to inquire whether the proposed resources would include assigning a position to each of the other ICAC taskforces.

The Subcommittee inquired into what process for de-confliction is utilized by CHP when a potential CSAM case arises to avoid overlapping and duplicative investigations. The CHP provides the following response:

“To prevent overlapping investigations and duplication of efforts, the CCIU employs de-confliction strategies, coordinating with state clearing houses, local law

enforcement and Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) taskforces to determine investigative jurisdiction and responsibility.”

While the CHP confirms de-confliction strategies are in place, a description of that process remains unclear.

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## 0690 – Office of Emergency Services

### Issue 3: California Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force

Representatives of the regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) will provide an overview and impact of the budget proposal to fund the state's five ICAC taskforces.

#### Panel

- Tess Scherkenback, Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Lieutenant Juan Hidalgo, Sacramento Valley ICAC Taskforce Commander, Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
- Detective Sean Smith, Sacramento Valley ICAC Taskforce
- Detective Sergeant Monica Robinson, San Diego Taskforce Commander, San Diego Police Department
- Sergeant Michael O'Grady, Silicon Valley ICAC Taskforce Commander, San Jose Police Department
- Sheriff's Lieutenant Joe Smith, Person Crimes Unit, Fresno County Sheriff's Office

#### Background

The five ICAC taskforce members (San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Jose, and Sacramento) have submitted a factsheet for the Subcommittee which is also available to the public on the Assembly Budget website.

The ICAC program was created in 1998 by the federal Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which funded 45 regional taskforces throughout the nation. The effort has subsequently grown to 61 taskforces representing more than 5,400 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies. California is home to five task forces in the following areas: San Diego (led by the San Diego Police Department), Los Angeles (led by the Los Angeles Police Department), Fresno (led by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office), San Jose (led by the San Jose Police Department), and Sacramento (led by the Sacramento Sheriff's Office). These task forces each currently receive approximately \$950,000 General Fund per year. Funds are used for investigations, trainings and educational programs for law enforcement partners and the community, forensic technologies and equipment, and other needs that support complex operations that often involve the coordination of local, state, and federal partners to investigate, arrest, and prosecute these serious crimes. ICAC taskforces conduct both proactive and reactive investigations, and often serve as a forensic resource to affiliate and other agencies within the taskforce's geographic areas. This is particularly critical in smaller, rural areas that lack sufficient staffing resources and access to costly forensic technology.



The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the nation’s largest child protection organization, reports their cyber tips directly to the ICAC taskforces. Importantly, only the ICAC taskforces can receive these cyber tips directly. Preliminary investigations focus on computer crimes against children by individuals who use the internet, on-line communication platforms, and other technologies to distribute child sexual abuse material (CSAM). As these investigations proceed, child victims of ongoing physical and mental sexual abuse and/or trafficking are often revealed, heightening the sensitivity and urgency of these operations. In 2022-23, ICAC taskforces conducted 33,456 investigations into computer/technology crimes perpetrated against children, performed 10,964 digital forensic examinations on electronic devices, participated in 58 national coordinated investigations and made 1,210 arrests for internet crimes against children and youth.

**The Governor’s Budget**

The Governor’s Budget requests \$5.0 million ongoing General Fund for the Internet Crimes Against Children program to support the five regional ICAC taskforces. If provided, each taskforce will receive \$950,000 annually from the state to perform its operations.

**Staff Comments**

The Assembly has prioritized the general fund support of the ICAC taskforces with limited term funding for the past several years. With the recent dramatic increases in cybertips and the proliferation of child sex abuse material, the need for ongoing resources for the ICAC taskforces

are justified. Among the five ICAC taskforces, staff notes that the lead law enforcement agencies also work with nearly 450 affiliates, which include other law enforcement agencies such as police departments, district attorney offices, state agencies such as the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This collaborative approach ensures that their impact is met in all corners of the state.

The taskforces' expertise in these types of operations and investigations require not only law enforcement expertise, but deep subject matter expertise in handling highly sensitive cases that involve traumatized children and alleged perpetrators with sophisticated technical expertise to evade detection and prosecution. Staff notes that the relationships built among the taskforces and affiliate organizations for the last 27 years is one of the reasons their operations are so impactful. In particular, rural jurisdictions are able to rely on the taskforces for assistance with investigations and forensic review of evidence because they may lack the staffing, expertise in these types of investigations, or do not have the equipment to review the forensic evidence. Even larger jurisdictions may not have the type of forensic equipment or the expertise in these types of investigations that the taskforce members embody.

In addition to staffing needs, upgrading evolving technology to review forensic evidence is a substantial need for the taskforces as the equipment requires regular upgrades. With ICAC taskforces being the state's experts in these types of investigations, the Subcommittee may wish to consider additional resources for the ICAC taskforces in order to expand their investigative capacity and critical technology upgrades in order to curb the spread of CSAM, protect children from further victimization, and bring perpetrators to justice.

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.



## Office of Youth and Community Restoration

### Issue 4: Tribal Youth Diversion Programs

Panelists will provide an overview and impact of funds to support youth diversion programs with a focus on tribal youth diversion.

#### Panel

- Caitlin O'Neil, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Katherine Lucero, Director, Office of Youth and Community Restoration
- Joseph James, Chairman, Yurok Tribe
- Taralyn Ipina, Chief Operations Officer, Yurok Tribe
- Lorraine Orosco, Executive Director, Department of Education for the San Pasqual Band of Indians

#### Background

Youth diversion programs seek to deliver less formal interventions in response to youth behavior that would otherwise bring them into the formal juvenile justice system. The range of interventions can be broad, using community based programs, informal probation supervision, and other services to address the root causes of behavior.

**Discretion and Disparities.** Law enforcement officers often have significant discretion to divert youth and initiate a process that is the least restrictive and oftentimes, the most appropriate response that leads to improving youth outcomes without compromising public safety. If a youth is referred to probation, probation also may exercise its discretion to place the youth on informal supervision (when otherwise not restricted by law) in lieu of referring the case to the prosecutor. For cases that do get referred to the prosecutor, they also have the discretion to return the case to probation or initiate diversion proceedings rather than proceeding to file a delinquency petition. Finally, the judge also has discretion and can order informal supervision. The significant amount of discretion exercised at each stage provides each justice partner with the ability to select an individualized approach to addressing youth behavior using the most appropriate intervention. This wide discretion can also lead to varying outcomes for youth, despite similar delinquent behavior, which can result in racial, gender, geographic and other disparities based on demographic differences. It should be noted that initial law enforcement stops of youth have statistically shown to have a disproportionate impact on youth of color. For example, in a 2024 report from the Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development (Youth Diversion-Outcome and Equity Assessment & Cost Benefit Analysis), a review of youth stops made in April 2019 to December 2022 by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, and Long Beach Police Department showed Black youth were overrepresented by four times relative to their share of the population. This same report concluded that "youth of color who are disproportionately stopped are also less likely to be eligible for diversion programming, consistent with the research on the impacts of disproportionate minority contact."

**Impacts of Youth Diversion Programs.** Youth diversion programs have statistically shown to have better youth and public safety outcomes at a significant cost savings. The report referenced above compared the estimated cost of a diversion program per youth (\$13,646) yielded \$40,000 in savings, in addition to future averted estimated costs of more than \$175,000. In addition, avoidance of future contact with the justice system, improved decision making skills and improved grades in school were also attained.

**Youth Reinvestment Grant Program and Tribal Youth Diversion Grant Program.** The 2018-19 Budget Act included \$37.5 million to establish the Youth Reinvestment Grant program (YRG) to support youth diversion programs and practices that were evidence based, culturally relevant, trauma informed, and developmentally appropriate. Diversion programs were required to include alternatives to arrest, incarceration, and formal involvement with the justice system and also include one or more of the following components: education services, mentoring, behavioral health services and/or mental health services. The majority of the funds supported community-led programs that supported the highest need youth. Outcomes reported by grant recipients showed significant success—nearly 70% of youth served achieved no contact with the justice system and more than 50% achieved improved education outcomes.

In recognition that the YRG program did not include sufficient support for Native American youth who are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system and do not have consistent access to culturally appropriate, trauma-informed care and interventions, the 2019-20 Budget Act included \$10 million for a Tribal Youth Diversion grant program (TYD) that uses trauma informed, community based, and health based interventions. The TYD prioritized funds for diversion programs that address the needs of Native American children who experience high rates of juvenile arrests, high rates of suicide, high rates of alcohol and substance use, and where average high school graduation results were lower than 75%. The TYD grant program, which ran from July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023 included a tribal advisory group comprised of individuals representing the Sacramento Native American Health Center, Sycuan Tribal Police, the Office of Tribal Affairs within the California Department of Social Services, and the Children's Law Center. Funds could be used for programs such as youth courts where youth can appear before their peers to resolve their case or supporting alternative multidisciplinary approaches that combine mental health, education, substance use treatment and others. The grant, with amounts ranging from \$671,000 to \$1.4 million, ultimately supported the following nine tribes:

- Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Fort Mohave Indian Tribe
- Hoopa Valley Tribe
- Medchoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria
- Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians
- Pinoleville Pomo Nation
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
- Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Yurok Tribe

Beginning in 2023, the California Tribal Families Coalition (Coalition) began working in partnership with the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) to “explore the data

and story behind Native youth involvement in juvenile justice... [the] Coalition and OYCR will host tribal listening sessions and interviews to develop promising practices.”<sup>2</sup>

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

This agenda and other publications are available on the Assembly Budget Committee’s website at: [Sub 6 Hearing Agendas | California State Assembly](#). You may contact the Committee at (916) 319-2099. This agenda was prepared by Jennifer Kim and Bernie Orozco.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://caltribalfamilies.org/juvenilejustice/>