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California State Senate

SENATOR
TONY STRICKLAND
THIRTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



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March 6, 2026

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, CA Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
1021 O Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Full Funding for Proposition 36 Implementation

Dear Chairman Laird,

This letter is to request full funding for the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act (Proposition 36) in the upcoming 2026-27 California State Budget in amount of \$400 million.

Proposition 36, which passed statewide with strong bipartisan majorities and nearly 70% of the vote, represents a clear mandate from everyday Californians tired of unchecked theft and addiction, yet desirous of compassionate solutions. The \$100 million one-time allocation in the 2025-26 budget and the recent \$127 million in Proposition 47 grants for behavioral health, public defenders, local prosecutors, and local law enforcement, fall short of the full funding of this important law.

To ensure the full, fair and uniform implementation of this law statewide requires that the state commit dedicated, ongoing funding for the treatment programs, court resources, pretrial services, and indigent defense specified by Proposition 36.

The Judicial Council's recent report on Proposition 36's first six months of implementation (December 2024 to April 2025) provides critical insights that reinforce the need for robust funding. That report documents that of approximately 9,000 individuals charged with treatment-mandated felonies, some 15% (1,290) elected treatment. However, of those only 771 individuals were placed in treatment and only 25 actually completed treatment. This result is due not to lack of interest, but capacity shortages and process hurdles. Furthermore, initial reports continue to allay concerns about mass incarceration, as early data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Legislative Analyst's Office show no sharp rise in prison

populations, with the overall downward trajectory continuing through 2029. These positive trends—driven in part by Proposition 36's treatment diversions and evidence-based interventions—validate the measure's thoughtful design and underscore the urgency of full funding to scale up treatment access and sustain its successes.

On the fiscal front, the current one-time allocations—\$100 million spread thinly over three years and \$127 million in repurposed grants—represent only a short-term patch that starkly contrasts with the demands of Proposition 36's requirements and the will of California's voters. These limited funds cannot sustain the investment required for the core treatment mandates, requiring continuous delivery of substance use disorder screenings, mental health evaluations, and job training, as well as the anticipated increases in felony caseloads. County leaders and district attorneys have requested at least \$400 million annually for implementation, and we believe this is a good start.

The current mismatch of funding not only risks chronic shortfalls for counties, derailing the treatment-focused outcomes voters demanded, but also invites higher long-term expenditures on unchecked crises like overdoses and theft, undermining the measure's goal of cost-effective public safety. Underfunding Proposition 36 not only disrespects the clear will of the voters, but risks lost opportunity and momentum. The lack of effective implementation also inappropriately threatens to artificially set the law up for failure, which would be immensely frustrating and disheartening to the overwhelming majority of Californians who supported the measure.

I therefore request full and sustained funding for Proposition 36 in the 2026-27 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Strickland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

Senator Tony Strickland
36th Senate District
California State Senate