

April 4, 2023

Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair
Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 43 (Eggman) – Update to the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act

Dear Senator Eggman,

On behalf of the City of Eureka and the Eureka City Council, I would like to express my support for Senate Bill 43. The City of Eureka is the county seat of Humboldt County, California, and is the heart of the Redwood Coast. Eureka is the market and cultural center of a beautiful region surrounded by the world's tallest trees and rugged ocean landscapes. The City is known for its Victorian architecture and creative and welcoming culture. The City also, like so many cities across the nation, has a profound need for additional tools to address the growing behavioral health crisis.

SB 43 would provide much-needed updates to the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act, which was passed in 1967 to, in part, "end the inappropriate, indefinite, and involuntary commitment of persons with mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and chronic alcoholism, and to eliminate legal disabilities." California Welfare & Institutions Code 5000 *et. seq.*

The LPS Act aims to help those defined as "gravely disabled", which currently means those who are unable to provide for their own food, clothing, and shelter. This definition has been historically inadequate to address the real mental health needs in our communities. It also often leads to criminalization and jail rather than treatment. This standard has remained largely unchanged since 1967 and has become a serious barrier to needed treatment for those at risk of dying on our streets.

SB 43 would amend the definition to include a new focus on those with an inability to provide for their own nourishment, personal or medical care, shelter, or attend to self-protection or personal safety, due to their mental or substance use disorder. It would also require the courts to consider whether a person is able to appreciate the nature of their disorder or if their decision-making is impaired due to their lack of insight into their mental or medical disorders.

California is in the midst of a worsening behavioral health crisis, and the City of Eureka supports efforts to address it, including the SB 43 updates to the LPS Act.

Sincerely,

Kim Bergel
Mayor
City of Eureka

