



**California
Behavioral Health
Planning Council**

ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

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July 3, 2025

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair

Senate Committee on Labor, Public Employment and Retirement

1021 O Street, Suite 6530

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Opposition for AB 339 - Local public employee organizations:
notice requirements**

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

On behalf of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC), I am writing to express our opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 339 (Ortega).

The CBHPC serves as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Administration on behavioral health policies and priorities, as outlined in Welfare and Institutions Code §§ 5771 and 5772. Our diverse membership includes individuals with lived experience of serious mental illness and substance use disorders, family members, service providers, professionals, and representatives from state departments whose work intersects with California's behavioral health system. Their perspectives are essential and inform the Council's concerns outlined below.

AB 339 intends to require public agencies to give at least 60 days' notice to employee organizations before issuing or renewing service contracts that affect them and to include in the notice details such as contract duration. The bill also requires the public agency to meet and confer at the demand of the employee organization upon receiving the written notice.

Seemingly, AB 339 would impose new noticing requirements; however, it raises significant concerns regarding the broader implications and potential ripple effects. If passed, this bill could negatively impact local government agencies and nonprofit organizations that contract with them as it may unintentionally result in service delivery challenges and cause unnecessary delays in partnerships with community-based organizations



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that public agencies have already identified as essential amid ongoing public-sector staffing shortages.

Generally, Request for Proposals (RFPs) are released approximately four months in advance of contract start dates. However, the proposed noticing period would extend the process by an additional two months, creating an additional contracting barrier for both local agencies and current or potential service providers potentially disrupting service delivery. AB 339 could also discourage local agencies from partnering with community-based organizations, which are deeply rooted in disadvantaged communities and have historically supported local government in addressing service gaps by providing quality, cost-effective, and culturally competent services.

As the state prepares to implement the Behavioral Health Transformation amid rising behavioral health needs across California, it is crucial to strengthen local contracting processes and avoid introducing additional administrative burdens that could further hinder community-based organizations from supporting local government agencies in providing services to individuals living with a serious mental illness and substance use disorders.

For these reasons, the Council respectfully opposes AB 339. If you have questions about our position, please contact Jenny Bayardo, Executive Officer, at (916) 750-3778 or via e-mail at Jenny.Bayardo@cbhpc.dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tony Vartan, Chairperson

cc: The Honorable Assemblymember Liz Ortega
Members, Senate Committee on Labor, Public Employment and Retirement
Stephanie Gerstle Esparza, Legislative Director