



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**SEP 07 2011**

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am letting Assembly Bill 412 become law without my signature.

While this bill would enable increased funding for local emergency medical and trauma care services in Santa Barbara County, I am concerned about the growing use of penalty assessments and placing such a burden on a small group of people.

A person who commits an offense with a \$100 fine can end up paying more than \$500. A \$1,000 offense often becomes a \$3,700 liability. Increasing penalty assessments may have unintended consequences, such as forcing people of modest means to choose jail time over paying sums they can't afford.

Obviously, these penalty assessments are for good purposes: emergency medical services, the DNA data bank, court security, courthouse construction, traumatic brain injury, pediatric trauma centers, the fish and game preservation fund, and the automated fingerprint identification fund.

Costs of such projects, however, should not be borne by a narrow class of citizens. Those who break the law should be fairly punished for their transgressions, but not be subjected to ever-increasing costs that are more properly the responsibility of the public at large. Sooner or later, we must find better ways to pay for the public goods we truly need.

Sincerely,

  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.