



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2012

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1270 without my signature.

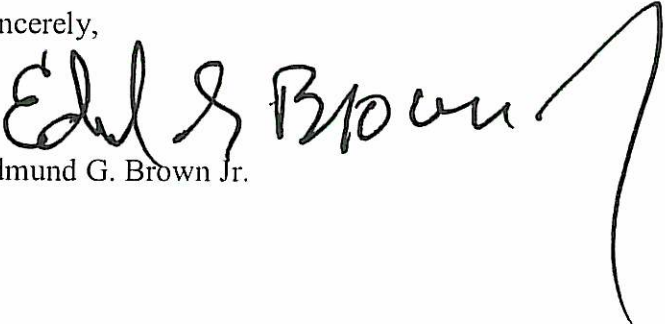
While it is important for our prisons to allow media access, this bill goes too far. This bill would give reporters expansive new rights to record on-camera video interviews with virtually any state prisoner—and, conversely, would give prisoners dramatically expanded access to the television media.

Currently, reporters are allowed to correspond with inmates by visiting them face-to-face, or contacting them by telephone and mail. Wardens can also let reporters conduct random face-to-face interviews with tape recorders, notebooks, and cameras. But this bill would prevent wardens from denying on-camera television interviews unless they pose “an immediate and direct threat.” This standard is too high. Wardens should be able to deny television interviews when they may reasonably jeopardize safety or prison operations.

Furthermore, giving criminals celebrity status through repeated appearances on television will glorify their crimes and hurt victims and their families. And the cost of implementing and monitoring this expansive new level of access should not be imposed at a time when prison budgets are being cut.

I agree that too little media access may be harmful, but too much can be as well. This bill gives too much.

Sincerely,


Edmund G. Brown Jr.