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32 Years of Feminism From Marching in the Streets to a Seat at the Table

June 22, 2020

Honorable Holly Mitchell
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814
Email: Bridget.Kolakosky@sen.ca.gov

RE: SB 144 - Criminal Fees - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Mitchell,

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for SB 144, which would eliminate most fees to pertaining probationers, and vacate unpaid balances of unenforceable and uncollectible fees. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities. Our organization is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County with approximately 300 members. Our vision is "to achieve a society based on the feminist values of social, political, racial and economic gender equality."

Existing law imposes numerous and expensive fees upon those who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. These fees are mostly charged to low-income people of color on probation who often find themselves unable to pay this debt. Although the fees were not intended to be punitive, in fact they impose a second form of punishment on those expected to re-enter society, find work, and care for themselves and their families. Of particular interest to SBWPC, a survey by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights found that women end up paying more than 80% of all fees, due in part to their taking responsibility for charges incurred by family members.

The Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards SB 144 as an important step in positioning probation as supportive of success, and the reduction of recidivism, by freeing those on probation of the burden of excessive criminal justice system fees and thus increasing the likelihood of successful re-entry into society. **Therefore, SBWPC wishes to sign on as a supporter of SB 144.**

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at info@sbwpc.org or visit our website: www.sbwpc.org

Sincerely,

Luz Reyes-Martin
President SBWPC

CC: Hon. Robert Hertzberg, email: Alex.Barnett@sen.ca.gov
CC: Hon. Monique Limón, email: Israel.Landa@asm.ca.gov
CC: Black Lives Matter Santa Barbara, email: HealingJusticeSB@Protonmail.com

