

NEWS

From Supervisor Gary Ovitt
Fourth District, San Bernardino County



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Ovitt supports group-home legislation

Fourth District County Supervisor Gary Ovitt, joined the effort in support of legislation, authored by State Senator Bob Dutton, which would give control of group homes to the communities where these facilities operate.

The four bills, SB 708, 709, 710 and 411 would give more control to communities before they open in an area. "When I served as mayor and City Councilman in Ontario, this was a highly charged issue and remains so today" remarked Ovitt.

Ovitt went on to say, "authorization for placing group homes in a community that houses six or less individuals in a home, is currently not required to receive local approval. That is unacceptable given any problems created and attendant costs that result are borne by the community."

Authorization for group home placement currently resides with Community Care Licensing, a division of the State Department of Social Services for juvenile dependents and delinquents and the Department of Corrections for individuals on probation.

Specifically Dutton's legislation would do the following: SB 708 requires that group homes serving six or fewer mentally disordered or otherwise handicapped persons or dependent and neglected children receive a conditional use permit which would permit counties and cities to regulate their placement.

SB 709 would provide information to the Director of the California Department of Social Services to assist the Director in making licensing decisions with a full understanding of the existing land uses in the neighborhood of the proposed facility.

SB 710 requires group home providers obtain a letter of support from the host county and assurances that the home would provide quality care and help to keep foster children in their own community.

Finally, SB 411 Would authorize local governments to provide relevant land use information within a neighborhood or adjacent to a proposed residential care facility.