

State of California ~ Department of Justice  
**OFFICE of the ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
KAMALA D. HARRIS

Contact: (415) 703-5837

## Statements of Support for Truancy Legislation:

### **Nancy O'Malley, Alameda County District Attorney**

“The Attorney General’s report provides invaluable information for any agency working to reduce truancy and chronic absence. The sharing of data, ideas and information between school districts, non-profit and government agencies throughout the state will allow each of us to do better at keeping our kids in school every day.”

### **Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles County District Attorney**

“These are important legislative proposals that will identify the children and families who most need our help,” Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. “We in law enforcement hope to intervene at an early stage to stop truancy before a child’s education is derailed and his or her future compromised.”

### **George Gascón, San Francisco District Attorney**

“Truancy reduction is critical for all of our communities, and I am pleased that the Attorney General has elevated it to a statewide priority. I believe that the proposed legislative package will help jurisdictions across California to better understand the scope of the problem, and to share solutions for reengaging our truant students. I encourage the legislature to support these bills - and to ensure that local jurisdictions have the resources we will need to put them into action.

### **Mark Peterson, Contra Costa County District Attorney**

“The direct correlation between truancy and juvenile delinquency is well-established and generally understood by educators and law enforcement personnel alike. Education is the foundation of public safety, but that means our children have to attend school and be in class. This legislation will provide the right tools our communities need to monitor school attendance and effectively assist children that are chronically absent.”

### **Tim Bowers, King County Superintendent of Schools:**

“The 2013 Attorney General’s report “In School On Track” has become the greatest tool to be given to those in truancy intervention since the induction of the SARB process in California. The report has given a second wind to those entrenched in child welfare & attendance and the utilization of SARB not only in Kings County but also in the Central Valley. *In School On Track* has reintroduced the importance of intervening in a child’s truancy as early as possible to those school districts that have not focused on chronic absenteeism and truancy in recent years. In order to keep the momentum of schools utilizing SARB and other resources to address chronic absenteeism and truancy I believe it is imperative that the Attorney General’s office continue offering this report on an annual basis. “

### **Ted Lempert, President, Children Now**

“We commend Attorney General Kamala Harris for her leadership and efforts to put an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. Research now shows that punitive practices are a far less effective strategy for improving

attendance and behavior than providing the social-emotional and behavioral supports needed to address the root causes of truancy and chronic absence. Last summer the Attorney General released *In School + On Track* detailing how schools cannot provide these supports alone. She also partnered with California Superintendent Tom Torlakson on a letter to districts titled, “Working Together to Reduce Truancy in Our Schools,” an example of how more agencies should be working collaboratively to improve services and outcomes for our children. Attorney General Kamala Harris rightfully understands that early support for students and families, positive behavioral interventions, and restorative justice practices are what is needed to improve school climate and attendance, and Children Now commends the Attorney General for her efforts to do something about it.”

**Brian Lee, State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California**

“On behalf of 400 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and crime victims who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California*, we express our strong support for Attorney General Harris’s efforts to increase graduation rates and reduce crime by addressing chronic absence and truancy. We look forward to working with you to enact these important reforms that will help keep more kids in school, off the streets, and out of trouble.”

**Dr. Pamela Short Powell, The California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators, President**

“The California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators (CAAASA), is a professional association for educational leaders that has worked for twenty years to address critical issues impacting African-American students. Its membership consists of African-American superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors and district and school site administrators as well as retired high-ranking administrators. CAAASA is committed to improving educational opportunities for African-American youth and increasing attendance among students of color who are at risk of not graduating from high school. Too many African-American and Latino youth fall victims of chronic absenteeism and truancy. Data reveals that this behavior often leads to serious discipline problems, school detentions and suspensions and public safety issues. CAAASA supports the efforts of the California Department of Justice, Attorney General Kamala Harris, to reduce truancy and chronic absence and applaud the department for addressing this urgent matter.”

**Graciela Espindola, California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance, State President**

“On behalf of the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance (CASCWA), I am proud to support the Attorney General’s efforts to reduce truancy and chronic absence in California schools. CASCWA is an organization comprised of school and community professionals who are dedicated to improving school climate, safety, and increasing school attendance. This legislation will assist local communities as they implement the Local Control Funding Formula and allow them to better serve children with attendance problems, particularly our neediest and most at-risk children. We look forward to working with Attorney General and the bill authors on our shared goal of improving school attendance.”

###