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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

In your May Revision of the California Budget, you announced your Administration's intent to close a state prison. I respectfully urge you to reconsider any plans that would include shuttering Calipatria State Prison in Imperial County.

Calipatria State Prison plays a critical role in the economic stability of Imperial Valley, a region that already faces some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. As of April 2025, Imperial County's unemployment rate stands at 16%—significantly higher than the state average of 5%. The prison provides hundreds of stable, good-paying jobs for local residents—many of whom support entire families and contribute meaningfully to our community's economy. For decades, these jobs have been a lifeline in an area too often overlooked in statewide development conversations.

Imperial Valley is a predominantly rural, low-income region that has long suffered from disinvestment and limited access to new economic opportunities. For many local residents, employment at the Calipatria State Prison represents one of the few reliable pathways to stable, middle-class jobs without leaving the region. The closure of this facility would strip away a critical source of economic security from families already struggling to make ends meet—and it would undermine our shared commitment to uplifting disadvantaged communities throughout California.

This threat to local jobs is especially urgent in light of recent developments. The announced closure of the Spreckels Sugar Plant—another major employer in the region—has already dealt a heavy blow to our workforce, leaving many families in economic uncertainty. Shuttering Calipatria State Prison now would only compound this hardship and deliver yet another serious setback to a community already under immense financial pressure.

This is about more than just jobs—it is about parents being able to provide for their children, young people choosing to stay in their community because there are opportunities to build a

stable life, and maintaining the foundational services and infrastructure that keep Imperial County afloat.

I urge your Administration to take into account the unique economic challenges facing Imperial County and to work with me and local stakeholders to explore alternative solutions that do not jeopardize the livelihoods of so many hardworking Californians. Together, we can chart a more equitable and sustainable path forward for the Imperial Valley.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your continued leadership on behalf of all Californians. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and encourage you to contact my Office at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raul Ruiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress