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## State budget effects worrying Contra Costa County leaders

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MARTINEZ -- The likelihood of broad, fundamental shifts of responsibilities to local governments coupled with partisan gridlock over the state budget and a state tax extension ballot measure is generating widespread uncertainty and concern among Contra Costa County government leaders.

"It seems the (state) is building a house with two-by-fours and, later, they will build the foundation," said County Probation Officer Philip Kader at a board of supervisors meeting Tuesday. "No one knows how this is going to go."

Kader, along with Sheriff David Livingston, District Attorney Mark Peterson, Employment and Human Services Director Joe Valentine and Health Services Director William Walker, delivered to the board of supervisors Tuesday a staggering list of financial hits to services based on what legislators have done or could do.

On a strict party vote, state lawmakers have approved some budget cuts but deadlocked over some of the budget's most controversial components, such as a June ballot measure that would extend existing sales and vehicle license fees five years.

The poor, elderly and children will suffer the most severe cuts, they said, while the realignment of public safety poses the largest set of unknowns.

Among the proposals, the state wants counties to jail and monitor all nonviolent, non-sex-crime offenders. Counties would also handle the offenders' parole violations, a task the state now performs.

Livingston estimates

it would mean an additional 200 prisoners a year in

the county jail, for which the state proposes to reimburse the county \$25,000 per inmate. It costs the state \$49,000 a year to house those inmates.

The responsibility to process the released offenders who violate their probation or parole rules would also fall to the county. Peterson estimates that would cost an additional \$1.3 million at a time when county probation and prosecution budgets are at critical lows.

For the full county analysis of the state budget and realignment impacts, go to [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us), click on "Board of Supervisors" and navigate to the Tuesday agenda.

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