

Gov. Brown offers help to counties taking more felons

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Gov. Jerry Brown giving a speech last month. (Cheryl A. Guerrero /

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By Patrick McGreevy

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SACRAMENTO -- Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) on Wednesday told law enforcement officials from throughout California that he is willing to do more to help them absorb the thousands of felons being sent to county jails rather than prison as part of the realignment program begun in 2011.

With county sheriffs and police chiefs in town to lobby state government for money and help, Brown cautioned nearly 300 of them in a speech that the state cannot go on a spending spree if it wants to set aside funds for tougher days ahead.

Brown said he has visited law enforcement officials in 10 counties, including Los Angeles, in recent months and likes how local officials are adjusting to the shift in felons.

"I am going to come around to as many counties as I can and I want to make sure where there's help needed we'll find a way to provide it," Brown said at the conference organized by the California Peace Officers' Assn. But, he added, "we can't resolve it all in Sacramento."

Brown said he is encouraged that the counties are exploring alternatives to jail including electronic monitoring, job training classes, day reporting, drug treatment and mental health services.

He praised a "real burst of creativity" by local law enforcement in accommodating the additional convicts.

"That right mix doesn't happen overnight. It's going to happen through learning, trial and error," he said. "I am very impressed and very appreciative that the counties are rising to the occasion and getting stuff done."

The governor told the law enforcement officials that he has learned a lot from when he was governor three decades ago. "It's pretty interesting. I find part of my mission here is to solve problems I created," he joked.

Brown was asked afterward by reporters about whether the suspension of three state senators over criminal allegations will change the behavior of other lawmakers. "I don't know if it will," he said, but added he thought that "people will be more conscientious in the days ahead."