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Katherine Douglas *Public Comment, Jail System Housing Options*

From: Elianna Arellano <elianna_arellano@ucsb.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 4:15 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Freedom 4 Youth 4/17/26 Hearing Public Comment
Attachments: Freedom 4 Youth Public Comment 4_17_26 Hearing.pdf

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Good afternoon,

I am Elianna Arellano, an advocate for Freedom 4 Youth. Freedom 4 Youth's public comment for tomorrow's hearing has been attached to this email. Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thank you.

Sincerely,
Elianna Arellano

Board of Supervisors, Committee, and Community members,

I am writing on behalf of Freedom 4 Youth in support of limiting the expansion of Santa Barbara County's North Branch Jail. The Board is currently faced with a decision between adding one additional housing unit and proceeding with the proposed one-and-a-half-unit expansion.

Our concern is rooted in the county's current allocation of its limited resources. Given the projected \$23 million budget deficit for the 2025-2027 fiscal year, allocating funds for the current jail expansion proposal risks diverting critical funding from safety, health, and social service programs that address the root causes of crime and foster stronger community relations.

In addition, we are urging the Board to reconsider the preemptive assumptions driving the need for a hypothetical overexpansion of North Branch Jail. An alternative expansion of 1.5 additional housing units inappropriately and inaccurately assumes an increase in incarceration that is not supported by projected population trends for the foreseeable future of Santa Barbara County.

Correspondingly, the primary demographic most represented in current jail populations, being that of working-age and young adults, is expected not only to stall out in the foreseeable future but may even decline within Santa Barbara County due to housing costs and economic pressures. Preemptively planning for a significant increase in incarceration amidst a stagnant or shrinking population raises significant concerns regarding possible over-incarceration and inefficient long-term planning within the justice system.

Likewise, over-expansion possesses risks in reinforcing delays in pretrial processing and prolonging periods of detention for individuals who have not been convicted, many of whom can be classified as nonviolent and could benefit from alternative programs such as various restorative justice initiatives, mental health services, and treatment programs.

Furthermore, the one-and-a-half unit expansion would commit the county to long-term spending that is estimated to amount to 147 million, which could instead be invested in supporting rehabilitation, improving case processing times, and reducing recidivism.

Ultimately, we strongly urge the Board to limit the jail expansion to one additional housing unit to ensure the option is reflective of the community's needs, prioritizes prevention over incarceration, and allocates public funds towards supporting the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,

Freedom 4 Youth Advocate

