

Sheila de la Guerra *Public Comment*

From: DeVika Stalling <devika@futureforlompocyouth.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 8:15 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Request to Read Letter into the Record – June 16, 2026 Public Comment
Attachments: Letter of Support for the Santa Barbara County Youth Fund and Youth Commission Proposal.pdf

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to respectfully request that the attached letter be read into the public record during today's Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting on June 16, 2026, as part of the public comment period.

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the meeting in person, but I would appreciate having my comments included in the official record for the Board's consideration.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Please confirm receipt of this email at your convenience.

Sincerely,

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De'Vika Stalling
Co Founder/ Executive Director
FUTURE For Lompoc Youth

June 16, 2026

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Letter of Support for the Santa Barbara County Youth Fund and Youth Commission Proposal

Dear Chair and Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of FUTURE for Lompoc Youth, I am writing in strong support of the proposed Santa Barbara County Youth Fund and Youth Commission.

As a youth-serving organization working directly with young people throughout the Lompoc Valley, we see firsthand the challenges and opportunities facing youth in our community. Every day, we work with students who are navigating poverty, mental health challenges, community violence, uncertainty about their future, and a lack of access to opportunities that help them discover their potential. We also see their resilience, leadership, and desire to make a difference when given the chance.

The recent tragic loss of five young lives in Santa Maria serves as a heartbreaking reminder of why we must be intentional about investing in our youth. While no single program can prevent every tragedy, these moments underscore the urgency of creating more opportunities for connection, mentorship, leadership development, and positive engagement. Young people need safe spaces, supportive adults, and meaningful pathways that help them see a future worth investing in.

The proposed Youth Fund represents more than a grant program, it is an investment in prevention, belonging, and hope. Research consistently shows that youth who are connected to positive peer networks, leadership opportunities, and caring mentors are more likely to succeed academically, less likely to engage in risky behaviors, and more likely to become active contributors in their communities. The proposal's focus on peer-led prevention, leadership development, civic engagement, and community-based solutions aligns directly with what we know works.

Equally important is the creation of a Santa Barbara County Youth Commission. Too often, decisions affecting young people are made without meaningful youth input. Establishing a formal structure for youth voice sends a powerful message that young people are not simply recipients of services, they are partners in shaping the future of our county. Creating opportunities for youth to advise the Board of Supervisors, oversee grantmaking decisions, and identify community priorities will help cultivate the next generation of civic leaders while ensuring investments are responsive to real community needs.

At FUTURE for Lompoc Youth, we have witnessed the transformative impact that exposure, leadership opportunities, and youth engagement can have on a young person's trajectory. Through our career readiness programming, civic engagement initiatives, leadership development opportunities, and community partnerships, we have seen students gain confidence, discover new possibilities, and recognize their ability to create positive change.

Santa Barbara County's young people are one of our greatest assets. Investing a small portion of cannabis tax revenue into youth-centered prevention and leadership development is not only fiscally responsible, it is a moral responsibility. The long-term return on investment will be measured not only in dollars saved, but in lives strengthened, opportunities created, and communities made healthier and safer.

I respectfully urge the Board of Supervisors to support the establishment of the Santa Barbara County Youth Fund and Youth Commission and demonstrate a meaningful commitment to the well-being, leadership, and future success of our county's youth.

Thank you for your consideration and continued service to the residents of Santa Barbara County.

Sincerely,

Devika Stalling

Executive Director & Co-Founder
FUTURE for Lompoc Youth
Lompoc, California