



To: Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County (via email)
County Clerk of the Board (via email)

Re: **Update on Criminal Justice System Changes and Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusion in Santa Barbara County**

Date: December 1, 2020

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara appreciates the efforts of the staff of Santa Barbara County in following up on the recommendations from the July 16th criminal justice/racial equity hearing. We have had the opportunity to review the report for the Dec.1 meeting. We recognize that it is difficult to make extensive changes in a large organization with a long history of customs and rules. We encourage you to continue to address the considerable work that needs to be done to change the way we treat all people in our criminal justice system.

Of note, is the reduction of people incarcerated at this time in our jail. While this reduction was necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we strongly recommend that it continue at this level or below in the future. We encourage the implementation of diversion opportunities through the District Attorney's office, in collaboration with other institutions in our community. This is in keeping with the position of the League of Women Voters which also calls for a focus on humane treatment and rehabilitation with the goal of promoting the successful reentry into communities of those who have been incarcerated.

We look forward to continuing to follow the progress of the County of Santa Barbara as we work with our criminal justice system relative to racial issues and equity. We strongly support proposed actions from the current Update on Criminal Justice System Changes and Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusion in Santa Barbara County regarding data for an evaluation of racial disparities of the adult incarcerated population; adopting a statement of commitment to advance equity and inclusion; approving funding for initiatives requiring actions to support community voices and engagement with other departments and organizations, such as J.O.I.N.; and an fair process for distribution of the remainder of the equity funds.

We commend you for continuing this important work in addressing these issues regarding racism as well as addressing much-needed criminal justice reform issues for everyone.

Sincerely,

Vijaya Jammalamadaka, President
League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara