

#2

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

From: Leslie Chan <leskatchan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 12:57 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Comment for 12/1/2020 Board of Supervisors meeting



Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am a resident and voter of Santa Barbara and have lived here for three years. I am writing today to urge you to enact concrete solutions to address the racial inequities in policing and incarceration in Santa Barbara County. Over the summer, Public Defender Tracy Macuga testified that 75% of her department's total cases involved Black or brown defendants, showing the magnitude of this issue.

We must keep the jail population low. COVID-19 has forced action on the jail population, and has unintentionally provided an experiment demonstrating the benefits that this can provide. Over the summer, the county jail population was reduced by 37%, and crimes tended to decrease overall, including the most serious violent crimes. Add this to the fact that over half of the people in jail at any time are awaiting trial but cannot afford bail (and thus have not been found guilty!), and it seems obvious that we should keep the jail population low and work to reduce it further.

This will also save money, and this money should be used on services that benefit the community, such as mental health crisis programs and resources for vulnerable community members.

This money should NOT be redirected back to policing, and I urge you to reduce the annual budgets of policing institutions to invest in these community based alternatives to incarceration.

Further, the District Attorney needs to create diversion opportunities to provide people with several chances and reduce the criminalization of communities of color. These types of programs already exist for people accused of misdemeanors and have been successful. DA Dudley has already stated that she would support such a program for defendants accused of felonies, so I urge the Board to ensure that she follows through on this pledge.

Finally, to ensure that these changes do not further entrench systemic racism and inequity, the Board of Supervisors must begin the process of creating a civilian oversight system for the Sheriff's Office, in compliance with Assembly Bill 1185. This system must include adequate representation of the oppressed groups of peoples it is designed to protect.

Thank you,
Leslie Chan
Santa Barbara, CA 93105