

de la Guerra, Sheila Public Comment - Public Safety

From: Mario Alberto Espinoza-Kulick <mario@futureleadersnow.org>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 3:52 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Williams, Das; Hart, Gregg; Hartmann, Joan; Nelson, Bob; Lavagnino, Steve
Subject: Public Comment on Santa Barbara County Budget
Attachments: Espinoza-Kulick Public Comment SB County Budget.pdf; ATT00001.htm; FLA email banner 2.png; ATT00002.htm

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Dear Supervisors Nelson, Hartmann, Williams, Hart, and Lavagnino,

Please see below my public comment with regards to the County Budget. I have also attached my comment as a PDF to this message.

Thank you!



Santa Maria | Santa Barbara | Oxnard

June 7, 2021

TO: Supervisor and Chair, Bob Nelson, Fourth District
Supervisor and Vice Chair, Joan Hartmann, Third District
Supervisor Das Williams, First District
Supervisor Gregg Hart, Second District
Supervisor Steve Lavagnino, Fifth District
CC: County Executive Officer, Mona Miyasoto

Dear Supervisors Nelson, Hartmann, Williams, Hart, and Lavagnino,
My name is Dr. Mario Espinoza-Kulick, PhD, and I am the Health Equity Policy Manager for Future Leaders of America. Over the past five years, I have worked as a researcher and community leader with Latinx Immigrant and Indigenous groups throughout the Central Coast region. I have lived in Santa Barbara County for over six years, and I write to share my views as a constituent of Santa Barbara County's Fourth District.

Santa Barbara County continues to spend an increasing amount of our funds on public safety. More than \$255 million of County funds are currently budgeted for supervision, prosecution, policing, and incarceration. However, these punitive approaches contribute to racial inequities, expose communities and families to violence, and contribute to cycles of poverty. I urge the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to reduce this budget allocation by at least \$26.7 million and 165 FTE's. This will bring the public safety budget more closely in line with other comparable counties and enable the County to make meaningful investments in strategies that can reduce crime, violence, and harm in our communities.

In the wake of this pandemic, it is of the highest importance that we make substantial investments in social services, healthcare access, and eliminating poverty. By addressing the underlying causes of crime, this approach of proactive spending contributes to our community, decreases crime, and reduces the need for police and other emergency services. For instance, we need more housing for low-income communities. The lack of affordable housing in Santa Barbara County leads to economic desperation and unstable living conditions, increasing the likelihood that individuals will become involved with the criminal justice system. The impacts of housing costs hit Black and Brown communities the hardest. We can also utilize alternative thinking when it comes to addressing issues of harm and violence. For instance, the Behavioral Wellness office can be supported to provide non-jail alternatives for mental health and addiction needs. By taking on a holistic approach to understanding community need and health disparities, our County can meet this moment by investing in equity.

I call on each of you to reduce the allocation to the Sheriff's budget to make investments that will improve all aspects of our community and decrease longstanding racial and ethnic disparities.

Sincerely,
Dr. Mario Espinoza-Kulick, MA, PhD
Health Equity Policy Manager, Future Leaders of America
www.futureleadersnow.org

