

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

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From: Pamela Flynt Tambo <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 3:12 PM
To: Williams, Das; Hart, Gregg; Hartmann, Joan; Nelson, Bob; Lavagnino, Steve
Cc: County Executive Office; Miyasato, Mona; Vijaya Jammalamadaka; sheriff@sbsheriff.org; jdudley@districtattorneysb.org; Heitman, Tanja; Macuga, Tracy; sbcob
Subject: Letter for County Supervisor Meeting on 1-11-2022
Attachments: Revised LJP letter to SBCounty Supervisors 22-0110-2.docx



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Attached is a letter regarding the COVID outbreak at the jail. Please file it as appropriate as a public comment for the County Supervisor Meeting on 1.11.2022.

Thank you,

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The past has its own inevitability.
But it is never too late to change the future.

- Heather Cox Richardson
December 28, 2021



CLUE (Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice) Santa Barbara

January 10, 2022

Subject: Support for acceleration of the multi-disciplinary team

Dear Chair Nelson and Supervisors:

CLUE-SB's work group and League of Women Voters' criminal justice reform group have strong concerns about the new outbreak of COVID-19 cases in the jail, particularly in light of increased numbers of low level offenders being jailed because of failure-to-appear warrants and similar issues. If we understand the current numbers, nearly 200 of those recently admitted to jail are low level offenders who, objectively, are not likely threats to public safety. They account for nearly all of the recent increase in jail population.

We request that you find ways now to accelerate the multi-disciplinary team for risk assessment and re-entry planning. The current COVID-19-driven health crisis in the jail and elsewhere strikes us as an emergency with powerful impetus to accelerate the creation and launching of the multi-team approach. The practical effect could be to help reduce the jail population now, as was done before at the initial COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, thereby reducing the threat of COVID for jail staff and residents.

We are very encouraged by on-going dialogues and possible Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) funding to establish a multi-disciplinary, holistic intake/discharge planning team to better identify those who do not need to be jailed to protect the public. At a recent CCP meeting, we saw broad support for funding the Public Defender's holistic advocacy budget as well as the Probation Department's staff and set-aside funding to implement the multi-disciplinary assessment team in next year's CCP budget. There is little, if any, disagreement about the value of a multi-team approach; however, we also saw differing views about which Department should provide collaborative oversight. Two strong policy reasons lead us to support assigning this responsibility to the Probation Department:

- (1) Most importantly, Probation's focus is on supervision to assure public safety *in the community*. The Sheriff's Department may consider those housed in jail as "his people" (to borrow a phrase used by Chief Wasilewski at the recent

CCP meeting), but the focus here is about releasing people from jail into the community as a better means than jail to achieve public safety, reduce trauma for families of the incarcerated, and reduce recidivism. As a *community-focused* department, Probation is best positioned to coordinate this important work.

(2) Among the criminal justice departments, Probation is relatively neutral in comparison to the Public Defender or District Attorney who are in adversarial roles. Probation also has no vested interest in an enlarged jail population as a means to justify funding. The goal here is to house only those who need to be in jail. Probation's perspective is the clearest-eyed in that regard.

How to fund an accelerated start-up. We understand that CCP has reserve funding and we urge you to seek accelerated funding now from that group, or other sources, to prevent housing low level offenders in the congregate, COVID-spreading jail environment. Our voices would strongly support you in this. In the event CCP reserve funds are insufficient or unavailable to meet this urgent need, we recommend that reserve County funds be brought into play as an advance on next year's fiscal budget. We ask and encourage you to quickly and seriously explore these possibilities to find specific funding solutions. In short, we see safety concerns about the new COVID outbreak as a strong impetus to kick-start this multi-disciplinary approach now. Please let us know your thoughts about this and how we can support you.

Thank you for your ongoing earnest efforts to improve our criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

Laurence Severance, Ph.D., J.D.

Maureen Earls

Co-Chairs, CLUE SB

Criminal Justice Workgroup

Pamela L. Flynt Tambo

Chair, Social Policy Committee

for Vijaya Jammalamadaka

League of Women Voters Santa

Barbara

Cc: Mona Miyasato, CEO
Bill Brown, Sheriff
Joyce Dudley, District Attorney
Tanja Heitman, Probation Chief
Tracy Macuga, Chief Public Defender