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November 16, 2015

Dear Santa Barbara County Supervisors,

Literally hundreds of news stories which have emerged in the last year have highlighted a sea change in our understanding at the federal, state and local level of the misguided, wasteful and unjust nature of policies which have evolved over the last few decades governing the treatment, neglect and abuse of people with mental health disorders and complex needs in our communities.

The community-based mental health treatment centers promised at the time of the closing of state mental hospitals remain our responsibility today and until we address it at the local level, we will suffer the consequences of the neglect and consequent criminalization of hundreds and hundreds of our fellow community members who are falling through the cracks of a tattered system of care.

Today, in a small but significant way, Santa Barbara County has the opportunity to begin to rectify the failed policies which have put so many people at risk of the cruel revolving door of homelessness, needless incarceration and premature death.

In a recent presentation to the Families ACT! board and constituency, Sheriff Brown and his consultants presented their plan for programming in the proposed STAR Complex. Unfortunately, they had to admit that the funding for programming is almost entirely lacking.

The Report entitled Existing & Proposed Jail Analyses which was recently issued by CGL and Marx/Okubo illustrates that the operations of the STAR Complex would cost the county at least \$2M more annually than projected. It does not take into account how much additional savings would be available if we adjust our policy of incarcerating hundreds of people charged with minor offenses prior to their actual trial.

Even if the savings did not exceed \$2M annually, this amount could go a very long way toward funding actual treatment beds in actual mental health and alcohol drug treatment facilities which our county desperately needs. Please do NOT allocate precious funds for unneeded jail cells.

The decisions you will be making tomorrow relative to the funding of the North County Jail proposal, and in particular relative to proposed STAR Complex will be historic. They will be noted by our entire community today and in the days to come as contributing either to wasteful and misguided spending, going against all current wisdom about the needs of the population in question, or as a step in the direction of correcting the misguided policies of decades. The board and constituents of Families ACT! urge you to carefully consider you decisions relative to these critical issues and to keep the wellbeing of hundreds of our county residents with mental health disorders in your hearts and in your minds in the days to come.

Suzanne Riordan
Executive Director
Families ACT!

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: Nicky Shane <nickyshane@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 8:44 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: New prison

Please vote NO on the new prison.

Nicky Shane

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<http://www.nickyshane.com>

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: CamilleGilbert@aol.com
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 9:13 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: NO VOTE ON STAR COMPLEX!!!

Dear Supervisor

The STAR Complex is ill conceived. It is an out-of-date plan, that doesn't look toward new solutions, nor progressive in the least. It's not looking at the trend of reducing incarceration and helping the homeless with mental, alcohol and drug problems caught in the endless revolving door between being behind bars and thrown back on the streets.

We need to stop incarcerating hundreds of people charged with minor offenses prior to their actual trial. And we need to actually deal with the whole other issue, that has become a national disgrace, that of the homeless who have mental problems, and alcohol and drug addiction. They are being thrown behind jail bars and being treated like criminals, instead of people who need help. Putting them in jail only exasperates their problems.

We need to put money into getting beds for the mentally ill and treatment for those addicted to alcohol and other hard drugs, not just a bigger fancier jail.

Sincerely yours,

Camille Gilbert
Santa Barbara, CA

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: carolyn wood <woodcarolyn77@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 7:17 AM
To: Farr, Doreen; Wolf, Janet; Adam, Peter; SupervisorCarbajal; Lavagnino, Steve; sbcob
Cc: WOOD CAROLYN
Subject: NO North County Jail

We need a Psychiatric Hospital NOT a new Jail.

Stop the Criminalization of the mentally Ill....

We are in the modern age...what other illness do we treat with Jail????

Carolyn Wood - Friedman

Tresha Souders-Lacasse
1317 Palmetto Ave
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-4021

Dear Supervisor Farr,

I am writing to urge you NOT to support the S.T.A.R. Program. I am the mother of a dual diagnosed son who is presently incarcerated in the Santa Barbara County Jail. Our family's story is, unfortunately, the same story of many families in Santa Barbara County.

My son, Jeremy, was born and raised in Lompoc, CA. He was a happy child. The sound of his laughter could raise the spirits all who heard it. He was not the perfect student, but he received good grades and participated in the Gifted and Talented program in the Lompoc Unified School District. As Jeremy reached puberty and the teen years, his personality began to change. At first, I chalked it up just "teenage rebellion." We sought family and individual counseling for Jeremy. Nothing seemed to help. And so we just endured, hoping that as he matured he would become more like the child knew.

Unfortunately, things became worse. He became addicted to Methamphetamine and began drinking and smoking marijuana. We sent him to a rehab program. In fact over the past 25 years we have sent him to 8 separate rehab programs. He always stopped using drugs a little while, but ultimately, he always returned to the drugs and alcohol. We estimate that we have spent over \$40,000 on rehab programs for Jeremy.

A few years ago, after returning home from yet another rehab, Jeremy saw a psychiatrist. Jeremy was given a diagnosis of Paranoid Schizophrenic. Although this was very disturbing, there was also hope that he could be treated. However, by this time, Jeremy was totally addicted to Meth and alcohol and opiates.

He refused to take the medication offered by the psychiatrist and instead took the drugs that made him feel somewhat "normal."

Jeremy moved out of our home and rented an apartment in Lompoc. That was 3 years ago. His behavior has been deteriorating since that time. At one time I was told by the Lompoc Police that they had been called to Jeremy's home over 20 times, and most of those calls were from him, reporting that he was seeing people trying to break in to his home.

Please be aware, that during all these incidents I have been seeking some kind of treatment for Jeremy in my community. Most agencies I contacted did not even return my phone call.

Tresha Souders-Lacasse
1317 Palmetto Ave
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-4021

The story continues Jeremy's arrest. He is now in the Santa Barbara County Jail (**sleeping on the floor because there are no beds available**) awaiting arraignment. He will likely spend months or years in jail for basically having schizophrenia. Yes, he did much of what he is being charged with and our laws say he should be punished, but will this really make him change or will he return to the out of control life that he has been living?

Jeremy needs treatment and a safe place to live. The statement "**Beds not cells**" describes his situation perfectly. He needs psychological counseling, rehabilitation for his drug addiction, and a good psychiatrist who can prescribe legal medications so that he will not return to self-medicating. The monies from the S.T.A.R Program could provide these needs for Jeremy

Thank you for reading Jeremy's story. Please do all you can to help him and all the other mentally ill and drug addicted people in Santa Barbara County!

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: Onja <eonja2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 7:54 AM
To: Farr, Doreen; Wolf, Janet; Adam, Peter; SupervisorCarbajal; Lavagnino, Steve; sbcob
Subject: Beds Not Cells!

As a Member of the Board of Directors of FamiliesACT! whose primary objective is to be a voice for those that are most vulnerable in our community, I urge you not to vote for permitting the Sheriff's Department to go forward on building the S.T.A.R. complex. This county needs the money for TREATMENT BEDS, NOT additional JAIL CELLS.

It is inhumane to commit people that are experiencing an identifiable mental illness, and who are charged with petty crimes to be incarcerated. In many cases such a situation leads to even more pronounced problems, due to the additional stress of confinement and treatment in a jail setting. If such a person were to be diverted to a medical treatment facility IN THE COMMUNITY, rehabilitation is likely to be more successful and much more cost effective.

The analysis of the existing jail facility shows that there is about \$15.6 million of deferred maintenance work needed over the next ten years, a figure that is not reflected in the CGL report, or the Sheriff's cost projections. Some of that would be avoided if portions of the existing facility were shut down following the opening of the new North County Jail. Sheriff's officials said they are evaluating the CGI report to see if full implementation of the recommendations are necessary.

In addition, the Sheriff has pointed to staffing troubles are also a major consideration in recruiting staff. He points to the CGL report's increased staffing recommendations for some of the budget discrepancies. "While the Sheriff's Office recognizes that this proposed staffing increase represents a 'best case' scenario, we have operated at minimal staffing for several years at the main jail," Ms. Hoover explained. "As the largest agency in the county we have the greatest burden of finding exceptional people to fill our vacancies. Like most law enforcement agencies across the country, we too are experiencing challenges with recruiting quality candidates. Our recruitment and selection efforts are ongoing and we maintain committed to finding and selecting the right people to join the ranks of the Sheriff's Office."

County officials said they are not surprised by the numbers. "The last analysis of total jail operating costs, including the North Branch Jail facilities, was presented in May 2015, which indicated that the cost of all facilities was higher than the original funding plan; so it's not surprising that the costs are higher than the original funding plan.

The Sheriff's Office is one of just two county departments that failed to stay within its projected budget for the first quarter of the fiscal year. The county report shows the Sheriff's Office is currently \$65,000 over its budget, a figure that may increase along with the cost of water. The Goleta Water District recently imposed a drought surcharge that could cost the Sheriff more than \$100,000. The Sheriff's Department's total operating budget for fiscal year 2015-16 is \$124,447,500.

"We have known this for some time," wrote County Budget Director Tom Alvarez. "The original funding plan only assumed the AB 900 (Main Jail) facility and not the SB 1022 (S.T.A.R. Complex) facility."

These are but a few of the major consideration involved with the Sheriff's Department wanting to assume the role of both punisher of crime and medical treatment. The two are simply NOT compatible. People trained in criminal justice have a totally different mind-set than those trained in dispensing medical treatment. Jails are for those that

need to be removed from the community because of some heinous act within the community, while studies have shown that those with mental illness are more likely to recover and be more successful, if provided treatment in the community. Consequently, the additional cost for adding on to the jail is tantamount to a waste of tax payers money. Such monies could best used by building a treatment facility, that is not part of the jail.

A final thought being processed into jail places serious restrictions on a the person's ability to be successful, particularly in terms of employment and education when returning to the community.