

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment : Public Safety

**From:** Arlene Stepputat <arlene@dyinginrace.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 10:28 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Improve racial justice and prioritize humane treatment for justice-involved people in our County.

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Dear County Supervisor,

I write to express my strong support to improve racial justice and prioritize humane treatment for justice-involved people in our County. I respectfully but firmly call on you to reallocate our criminal justice budget to advance transformational changes:

Permanently reduce Sheriff's Department funding to support a long term average jail population of approximately 550.

Reduce general funding for our Sheriff's Department by up to \$26.7 million and 165 FTEs to bring our Sheriff Department budget in line with comparable counties.

Reduce Sheriff's Department funding for traditional policing that doesn't reduce recidivism. Reallocate funds to community-based diversion and alternatives to jail, including more funds for the Behavioral Wellness Department to provide non-jail alternatives for mental health and addiction needs. Reallocate funds to support transition planning for jail residents returning to our community.

Increase funding for the Public Defender Department to expand holistic advocacy and culturally competent staff to improve advocacy across the racial/ethnic spectrum.

Reallocate funds to County CEO to expand and centralize data collection and analytics. Require Departments to provide evidence-based data for programs to reduce recidivism.

Offer a grant to the Sheriff's Department to expand jail internet and volunteer access - - including the award winning Freedom to Choose program that reduces recidivism.

Rethink plans for \$28M to refurbish the South County Jail. Reduce footprint to about 200 jail beds. Repurpose funds to build transitional housing to help stabilize eligible jail residents' re-entry into our community. Build a separate assessment center to screen and divert those who are appropriate for community-based alternatives.

Fund seed money to study a possible Civilian Oversight Commission to help assure Sheriff Department transparency and accountability, and deter police misconduct.

Transformational change requires courage. I will watch for you to vote for big change now. The commissioned KPMG studies and we, the people, will support you in this.

Sincerely,  
Arlene Stepputat

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Date: April 14, 2021