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Public Comment - Group 2

Ramirez, Angelica

**From:** Andy Caldwell <andy@colabsbc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 1, 2021 12:12 PM  
**To:** Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg; Lavagnino, Steve; Nelson, Bob; Williams, Das  
**Cc:** sbcob  
**Subject:** COLAB Comment BOS 6/1/2021 Agenda Items D-1 and D-2



**Importance:** High

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Dear Supervisors,

I trust you will allow for some "late" comments on today's agenda considering the fact the meeting wasn't noticed until late Friday of a three day weekend.

D-1 Your board has suddenly found yourselves flush with tens of millions of dollars, from the federal covid bailout (with restrictions and deadlines as to spending) and marijuana proceeds (no apparent restrictions).

1. We would urge your board to pay down your debts and deficits as your first priority to the maximum extent feasible. As you are all well aware, you have over \$400 million in infrastructure debt.
2. With respect to the consideration of spending another \$7 million on the homeless, we would ask that you postpone that decision until you can fully assess how much you are already spending along with the federal, state and the cities in your jurisdiction. This has to do with our hope that somebody someone will figure out that continuously throwing more money at a problem, in perpetuity, as it seems, is not working.
3. The County should consider parking as much of this money in a interest bearing account and use the interest only to fund on going needs. We expect some serious inflation coming our way.

D-2 Reducing the holding capacity of the South County Jail

We will defer to our ELECTED Sheriff Bill Brown on this matter. That is, without the undue pressure from certain board members and our public defender who are all in with respect to the decarceration movement.

Specifically, we don't believe in this day and age you can have too much jail space in CA, especially in light of the fact that our erstwhile governor is planning on releasing another 70,000 state prisoners including 20,000 lifers!

Moreover, we refuse to fall for the trick that serious crime rates are down. They are only down because California redefined what constitutes a serious crime. People are getting gunned down on a nearly weekly basis in the North County. Merchants have quit reporting crimes and our law enforcement personnel have ceased to report in a similar manner because they know nothing will come of their efforts.

Reducing the size of the jail will only exacerbate these trends.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Andy Caldwell  
COLAB

## Ramirez, Angelica

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**From:** Dylan Griffith <djgriffith32@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 1, 2021 12:15 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Investing in Community Alternatives to Incarceration

**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 Clerk of the Board,

It is my hope that this comment can be submitted on the public record for the Special Meeting that begins today at 1pm.

I am a Santa Barbara resident who has been directly impacted by the criminal legal system. I've lived here for nearly 7 years and am deeply involved in the community, particularly in connection to people who have been impacted by our local criminal legal system. My personal experience has demonstrated how white people are given preferential treatment at every single point in the system., and that the system as a whole is not set up for rehabilitation nor preventative measures for crime. I hope you find the following demands and evidence useful when considering how financial decisions can impact thousands of your constituents.

I am writing to insist that the County take steps towards permanent and ongoing reduction of the jail population. One crucial step you can take towards increasing public safety is to reduce the annual budget for the Sheriff by \$26.7million for the 2021-2022 FY, as well as reducing the budgets for the District Attorney and Probation Department. Community members are demanding less criminalization and more practical community-based support. SB County currently spends more on supervising (Probation), prosecuting (District Attorney), policing and incarceration (Sheriff) than it does on Public Health, Behavioral Wellness, and Child Support Services combined. Further, SB's rates of arrest are above the CA average while the reported crime rate is well below the CA average. Our County spends far too much on criminalizing people instead of investing in peoples' development and futures. Local justice system institutions have proven that they are incapable of rehabilitation in ways that effectively reduce crime and recidivism, ultimately decreasing public safety. **Investing in affordable housing, community-based initiatives that function as alternatives to incarceration, diversion programs, and transitional support services for folks reintegrating after being in custody, mental health services, and more is what true public safety looks like.**

First and foremost, the County currently surveills, polices, prosecutes, and incarcerates Black and Brown children at alarmingly violent rates compared to white children. There are currently 0 white children incarcerated in all of SB County. 94% of children on probation supervision (both in and out of custody) are Black, Brown, or Asian. These statistics demonstrate two things: (1) SB County currently invests in state-sanctioned violence against Black and Brown children and (2) alternatives to incarceration, preferential treatment and sentencing in the legal process, practically nonexistent policing and surveillance, and diversion opportunities are reserved for white children. It is vital to recognize that most children who are incarcerated are also at or below the poverty line for various reasons that can also be traced back to how SB County allocates its financial resources.

Given the strong connection between housing instability and mental health challenges, I want to stress the importance of creating and investing in systems that address the root causes of criminalized behaviors and not the symptoms of the problem. A significant percentage of residents, predominantly BIPOC residents, in our County have been in housing crises for years, decades, and even over centuries. SB County has yet to succeed in creating permanent supportive housing programs that combine community-based services and long-term rental assistance. SB also consistently wields one of the highest rates of poverty in California,

largely due to active waves of gentrification that push Black and Brown residents out of the community. The vast majority of individuals who become incarcerated in SB County are not property owners. They are renters; disproportionately Black and Brown; near or below the poverty line; and have active mental health challenges. This is especially relevant for children in our County considering 81% of youth in the local system have open mental health cases compared to the 48% CA average.

Investing in incarceration while not investing in supportive housing efforts reinforces the houselessness-jail cycle that plagues our County. At a Community Corrections Partnership Racial Equity Sub-Group meeting in October 2019, Chief Wasilewski presented data showcasing how 91% of the individuals whom the Sheriff's Office disgustingly labeled as "super offenders" (people who had been incarcerated 5+ times that year) were considered transient or actively houseless. This statistic clearly demonstrates how our County has prioritized the criminalization of people in need and failed to invest in adequate forms of support.

This is an opportunity for SB County to invest in systems that serve as preventative measures for crime. **Investing in affordable housing, community-based initiatives that function as alternatives to incarceration, diversion programs, and transitional support services for folks reintegrating after being in custody, mental health services, and more is what true public safety looks like.** We currently invest in institutions that perpetuate trauma and poverty more than anything else. Now is the time to reimagine public safety and find new ways to support the residents of SB County.

Sincerely,  
Dylan Griffith