



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

2021 OCT 11 AM 11:01

CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: October 19, 2021

04

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

A RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

There are multiple proposals at the federal and state levels led by advocates that have been at the forefront of reforming the criminal justice system. Communities across the country are working to safely reduce the number of people unjustly in jails and prisons through data-informed, evidence-based measures and we must join them.

At local, state, and federal levels of government there are proposals to reform criminal justice and police policies, including pretrial detention reform, and alternatives to arrest and incarceration for individuals who do not pose a public safety threat. The County of San Diego has been working towards criminal justice reform by providing an equitable and accessible system. The system continues to be adjusted by ongoing review of policies that invest in jails' rehabilitation efforts; and promoting best practices to ease reentry and reduce recidivism.

The County of San Diego reaffirms its commitment to reform by working with our Justice partners: Public Safety Group, Health and Human Services Agency, and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, along with community-based organizations and justice-impacted individuals, to move forward policies that seek reform using a data-driven and evidence-based approach.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER AND SUPERVISOR NORA VARGAS

1. Adopt the Resolution entitled: **ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY**

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This resolution underscores the County’s commitment to advancing criminal justice reform in our region and uplifts individuals who are impacted by the system. People of color are often overrepresented in the criminal justice system. African Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, and they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences. African American adults are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than whites and Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely.¹ People with mental illness are also overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Nationally, more than one quarter of people in jail meet the threshold for serious psychological distress and nearly half had been told by a mental health professional that they have a mental illness.² As the County moves forward with creating reforms around the criminal justice system and its current behavioral health system it’s important to acknowledge and address the conditions of poverty and injustice certain communities experience.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. There may be future fiscal impacts associated with recommendations resulting from today’s action; any such recommendations would need to be approved by the Board.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

At local, state, and federal levels of government there are proposals to reform criminal justice and police policies, including pretrial detention reform, and alternatives to arrest and incarceration for individuals who do not pose a public safety threat. The County of San Diego has been working towards criminal justice reform by providing an equitable and accessible system. The system continues to be adjusted by ongoing review of policies that invest in jails’ rehabilitation efforts; and promoting best practices to ease reentry, reduce recidivism and aim towards desistance.

In addition to rehabilitative efforts, there has been a shift toward treatment, rather than incarceration for individuals struggling with substance abuse and mental illness. Examples of this shift include budget allocations to enhance the presence of behavioral health staff in the jails and an increase in mobile crisis response teams across the County. Rehabilitative treatment for individuals is the path forward for wellness, self-sufficiency, and quality of life.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2016, 8 tbl.6 (Jan. 2018).

² U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Indicators of Mental Health Problems Reported by Prisoners and Jail Inmates. (Jun. 2017).

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY

We must invest in often underfunded community-based resources outside of the traditional justice system. Resources such as supportive services, counseling, treatment, and workforce development are upstream approaches that work. Systemic changes include reexamining enforcement practices and the money bail system, as well as creating the infrastructure to divert people to alternatives to incarceration. Diversionary approaches help prevent harm in the community, support rehabilitation, and ensure that incarceration is used as a last resort.

Any systemic reformation must be coupled with a collective understanding of the racial disparities that underpin our current system. For example, nationally, Black people comprise 13 percent of the US population but roughly 30 percent of the arrested, 35 percent of the imprisoned, 42 percent of those on death row, and 56 percent of those serving life sentences. We need better alternatives that uplift diverse communities of color, including disabled and LGBTQ2IA+, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and other communities of color. We must create and support safe environments for all communities by building trust between law enforcement, our partners in the criminal justice system, and the communities they serve and protect.

The County reaffirms its commitment to reform by working with our Justice partners: Public Safety Group, Health and Human Services Agency, and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, along with community-based organizations and justice-impacted individuals, to move forward policies that seek reform using a data-driven and evidence-based approach.

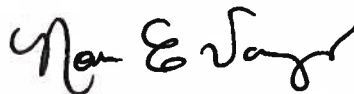
LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Living Safely Strategic Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan by promoting the importance of criminal justice reform in our region. This action advances San Diego as a safe and resilient community for residents to be healthy, safe, and thriving.

Respectfully submitted,



NAME
Terra Lawson-Remer, 3rd District



NAME
Vice Chair Nora Vargas, 1st District

ATTACHMENT(S)

A RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY