

May 13, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

MOTION TO TERMINATE FUNDING FOR THE TURNING POINT ACADEMY AND REDIRECT FUNDING TO COUNTIES FOR PROBATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS - (ITEM NO. 11, AGENDA OF MAY 14, 2002)

Item No. 11 on your agenda for Tuesday May 14, 2002, is a motion by Supervisor Knabe to send a letter to the County's State Legislative Representatives and the Governor, urging that the funding for the Turning Point Academy (TPA) be terminated and redirected to counties for existing probation programs, and instructing our Sacramento advocates accordingly. This is a matter for Board policy determination.

For your information, the purpose of the TPA is to provide a comprehensive and meaningful military academy experience for minors residing in California who are 15 years of age or older and who have committed a firearms-related offense at school or at school events. The TPA, which is operated by the National Guard at its camp site in San Luis Obispo, has an annual operating budget of \$7.4 million to accommodate a daily enrollment of 60 cadets. Since its inception in 2000, the TPA has accommodated 15 cadets, 9 of which have been from Los Angeles County (at no cost to the County). According to the National Guard, the cost to the General Fund per cadet has been approximately \$400,000 because of high start-up costs and low enrollment. They estimate that with an enrollment of 100 cadets, the cost would be around \$30,000-\$35,000 per cadet.

The Governor's budget for 2002-2003 includes \$3.0 million from the General Fund based on a daily enrollment of 30 cadets, a reduction of \$4.4 million. The LAO has

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recommended that the Legislature withhold further funding until it has a chance to review the Administration's proposal to expand eligibility requirements.

SB 1979 (Costa) contains the Administration's proposed changes in eligibility requirements by expanding the qualifying criminal offenses to include assault, possession or sale of controlled substances and drug paraphernalia, damaging property, theft and receiving stolen property, possession of an imitation firearm, and hate violence. The bill would also permit minors with one prior juvenile delinquency adjudication to be eligible. Additionally, SB 1979 would extend the sunset date two years from January 1, 2003 to January 1, 2005. According to the Probation Department, the proposed change will substantially increase the number of eligible candidates. SB 1979 is being held without recommendation in the Senate Public Safety Committee.

Aside from issues of low enrollment and high cost, opponents of TPA claim juvenile boot camps are ineffective in reducing delinquency, and cite numerous research studies. Proponents for the TPA argue that these studies are not relevant because the TPA is not a traditional boot camp due to its educational and counseling components.

While the motion mentions TPA program costs of \$9.2 million, the actual funding that would be freed up from terminating the program would only be \$3.0 million because of the Governor's proposed reduction. In addition, there is no way to assure that these savings will be transferred to counties for other youthful offender programs.

The Probation Department has indicated that while the Turning Point Academy may not be cost effective for the State, it is cost effective for the County because there is no cost to the County to use the program.

On April 10, 2001, your Board adopted a resolution approving the County's participation in the Turning Point Academy. Notwithstanding the resolution and the County's current policy in support of increased funding for programs for delinquent and/or emotionally disturbed minors who require intensive case management services or for alternative camp placement including public/private partnerships, this is a matter for Board policy determination.

DEJ:GK
JL:JR:md

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Legislative Strategist
Probation

