

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

February 7, 2023

**Applying for the Ending Girls’ Incarceration Initiative in Support of Los Angeles County’s Efforts to Decarcerate Girls and Young Women**

On January 18, 2023, the State’s Health and Human Services Agency’s Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) and the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) announced the “Ending Girls’ Incarceration Initiative”, a competitive application process, to “...reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the incarceration of girls in the state of California.”<sup>1</sup> This unprecedented, statewide initiative will provide four counties, “led by their probation offices in collaboration with other system leaders—the opportunity to receive from OYCR and technical assistance from the Vera Institute of Justice to implement equitable policies and gender-responsive programs for girls and gender-expansive youth.”<sup>2</sup>

This initiative goes hand-in-hand with the Los Angeles County Board of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/blog/2023/01/18/calhhs-office-of-youth-and-community-restoration-and-vera-institute-of-justice-launch-partnership/>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

**MOTION**

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Supervisors' (Board) motion, "Decarceration of Girls and Young Women: Addressing the Incarcerated Youth Population in the Los Angeles County Camps and Halls"<sup>3</sup> in November 2021.

At the time of the motion, there was a total population of 346 youth, of which 35 were incarcerated girls or gender expansive youth. As of January 30, 2023, the total detained population has increased to 508, including 53 girls and gender-expansive youth, with 37 in the juvenile hall and 16 at Dorothy Kirby Center and Camp Scott (which is located within Dorothy Kirby Center). The biggest increase is the number of pre-disposition girls and gender expansive youth (19 on November 22, 2021 and 29 on January 30, 2023) who are all housed at Central Juvenile Hall.

This increase in incarceration has occurred despite direct instruction from the Board to find alternatives to detention, continued advocacy by community advocates, and repeated documentation that the very nature of detention leaves girls and gender expansive youth particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation in a system that leverages the power of authority over already marginalized individuals.

The Los Angeles Times recently chronicled the accounts of five decades of abuse reported to be pervasive in Probation detention facilities as recently as 2018, by nearly 300 formerly incarcerated individuals, most of whom are female<sup>4</sup>. The article highlighted that such abuse of children in the context of detention is especially egregious because perpetrators use the power of their authority to manipulate potential victims.

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<sup>3</sup> [Board Motion](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Hundreds sue over alleged sexual abuse at L.A. juvenile halls - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](#)

The Board is committed to youth justice, justice reform, and supporting alternatives to incarceration to significantly change how the County engages with youth—beyond words, but through action and funding, as shown through the recent creation of the Department of Youth Development.

The Board also recognizes that there needs to be wide collaboration among all stakeholders, including the State and external partners, to support local efforts with additional fiscal and technical support, if we are going to achieve our collective goal to end the incarceration of youth in LA County and the State of California. This grant comes at an opportune time for LA County to move with the urgency youth deserve.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors

1. Direct the Chief Probation Officer and Executive Director of the Probation Oversight Commission, in collaboration with the Office of the Public Defender, the Office of the District Attorney, the Department of Youth Development, the Department of Children & Family Services, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and most importantly, youth with lived experience, as well as engagement with the Courts, to:
  - a. Apply for the California Health and Human Services Agency's Office of Youth and Community Restoration's and Vera Institute's Ending Girls' Incarceration Initiative by February 28, 2023.
2. Direct the Chief Probation Officer, Executive Director of the Probation Oversight Commission, and the Office of the Public Defender to provide the Board with a report back, in writing, in 30 days with the current status, and

steps taken that addresses the County's efforts to decarcerate girls and young women per the "Decarceration of Girls and Young Women: Addressing the Incarcerated Youth Population in the Los Angeles County Camps and Halls" motion, and every 60 days, in writing, until completion, with updates. The report back should contain, at minimum:

- a. Status on completing the plan, with timelines and clear objectives, to decrease and decarcerate girls and gender-expansive youth;
- b. A running census on the number of girls and gender expansive youth in the Probation's detention facilities for youth;
- c. Identification of trends that are leading to the increase in girls and gender-expansive youth and proposed plan to address, with recommendations; and
- d. Updates on engagement with County and community stakeholders and partners.

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