

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

AGN. NO.
August 4, 2026

Providing Youth with Swim Lessons at Probation Facility Swimming Pools

Incarcerated youth at almost all of Probation’s detention facilities have access to a swimming pool, and some youth have begun to experience the many benefits of swimming as part of their programmed recreation. Swimming offers an exciting opportunity for young people to exercise their bodies and minds. It is an effective and healthy form of physical exercise that is easy on the body’s joints, making it accessible for youth who may experience pain while doing other high impact exercises. Swimming is also shown to make a positive impact on mental health – studies demonstrate that aquatic aerobics can improve mood and anxiety symptoms, making it particularly beneficial for incarcerated youth, many of whom experience these mental health symptoms.¹

Over the past few years, youth could not use the pool since there were no certified lifeguards present to ensure safety and security. However, since the beginning of July, some Probation officers became certified lifeguards in partnership with the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LA County Parks) after passing the certification test, allowing youth to go and enjoy the pool weekly. This new development

¹ [Tang Z, Wang Y, Liu J and Liu Y \(2022\) Effects of aquatic exercise on mood and anxiety symptoms: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Front. Psychiatry 13:1051551. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.1051551](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.1051551)

MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
HORVATH	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

presents an opportunity to enhance the swimming program at Probation's juvenile facilities that have pools, which include Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, Barry J. Nidorf, Camp Kilpatrick, Dorothy Kirby Center, and Camp Afflerbaugh.

While youth now have access to the pool with certified staff to lifeguard, many incarcerated young people do not know how to swim. Learning how to swim is an essential skill that can save lives. While the risk of drowning is highest among young children², not knowing how to swim at any age significantly increases the risk of accidental drowning. According to the Center for Disease Control, youth of color drown at rates 7.6 times higher than white children.³ Furthermore, youth of color in the United States have disproportionately no- or low-level swimming ability: data shows that 64 percent of Black children and 45 percent of Hispanic children have poor swimming ability, compared to 40 percent of white children.⁴ Across all of Probation's facilities, approximately 95 percent of youth are Black or Hispanic, and anecdotal evidence reveals that some youth who are using the pool do not know how to adequately swim.

LA County Parks provides a variety of aquatics programming, including the Learn-to-Swim program. There is an opportunity to offer this swim program to the youth at Probation's facilities who do not know how to swim. The Probation Department should work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that while using the pool at Probation's facilities, and once they return home from incarceration, youth have developed basic swimming skills, so they are less at risk of drowning in the future and more likely to continue safe swimming practices.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors suspend Section 22.1 of the

² Association Between Swimming Lessons and Drowning in Childhood, A Case-Control Study: Ruth Brenner, et al., 2015 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4151293/>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/health-equity/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.poolsafely.gov/2018/02/22/addressing-racial-disparities-in-water-safety/>

Rules of the Board for the limited purpose of considering this motion.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to do the following:

1. Collaborate with the Department of Parks and Recreation (LA County Parks) to establish parameters and protocols for providing youth at all facilities that have a pool with LA County Parks' Learn-to-Swim Program, on a rotating basis and as needed, beginning in FY 26-27 and ongoing, to provide this life-saving and physical education programming at Probation's youth facilities;
2. Identify funding for the swimming lessons instruction so that LA County Parks can bill the Probation Department for the provision of services;
3. Develop, in collaboration with LA County Parks, a structured Learn-to-Swim instructional schedule that provides youth with consistent lessons, enabling them to progressively build swimming skills, confidence, and water safety knowledge; and
4. Report back in writing, within 150 days, in collaboration with LA County Parks, with an evaluation of the program outcomes. The report should include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. The number of youth who participated in and completed the Learn-to-Swim program;
 - b. Participant demographic information, including age, race, gender, and Probation facility; and
 - c. An assessment of the program's impact on incarcerated youth and lessons learned.

#

JH:ccr/dp