

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

September 1, 2026

ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR LESS RESTRICTIVE PROGRAMS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

SB 823, California’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Realignment, shifted responsibility for youth offenders from the state to county governments. This transition culminated in the closure of all state-run youth facilities on June 30, 2023. Counties now assume full responsibility for housing, managing, and providing rehabilitative services for youth who would previously have been committed to DJJ, using state-allocated funding.

To support this transition, the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) was established to help counties develop local, rehabilitation-focused programs rather than punitive ones. In addition, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) was created to provide technical assistance, to identify and disseminate best practices around rehabilitative and restorative youth practices, and to review county realignment plans. SB 823 emphasizes minimizing confinement and requires the use of the less-restrictive dispositional options. Under the revised JJRBG formula, 25% of what counties receive will be based on youth transferred to a Less Restrictive Program (LRP) from secure youth treatment facilities (SYTF) (5% for any LRP and 20% for LRPs in the community or facilities not subject to Title 15 regulation) by fiscal year 2028–2029.

The Board of Supervisors has remained committed to the safe and appropriate transition of youth into LRPs such as Pine Grove Fire Camp. These programs offer meaningful alternatives for youth who have been committed to SYTF. In Los Angeles County, many LRPs are operated by community-based organizations whose work in youth rehabilitation is commendable. However, this new direction did not come with a prescribed framework for oversight, data collection, or evaluation.

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At its March 12th meeting, the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) established an ad hoc committee to examine and strengthen LRPs. Los Angeles County Probation is responsible for supervising largest population of youth. Therefore, we have an obligation to ensure that young people who are found suitable for an LRP are placed in safe environments with access to services that support their rehabilitation. Given the large and growing population of former SYTF youth stepped-down into LRPs throughout the County, a continuum of LRPs has organically taken shape. This is a unique opportunity to analyze whether establishing a tiered level system of LRP step-downs can better serve and more appropriately address any barriers or challenges that are an obstacle to youth success. It is imperative that we establish a structured and county-tailored framework to evaluate program effectiveness and measurable outcomes, as this foundation is essential to support informed decision-making and ensure accountability.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Probation Officer in collaboration with the District Attorney, the Department of Youth Development (DYD), Public Defender, and the Alternate Public Defender, the POC with technical assistance from the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), and any other relevant departments to report back in 120 days with:

1. An overview of the current model for assessing youth such as the number of staff assigned, and any assessment tools and/or criteria used for making recommendations to the court for LRP placement.
2. A comprehensive list of all LRPs and their related services. This list should include:
 - a. The LRPs that are contracted directly by the county and those that are identified by the Court and/or other justice and community partners where youth are placed.
 - b. The feasibility of Probation keeping and providing a complete list of LRPs to the Court.
3. A detailed accounting of the cost of housing and services for each LRP youth per month, delineated by housing costs, service costs, etc..(both contracted and non-contracted by the county).
4. A summary of the authority Probation or any other county entity has for inspections and oversight for purposes of both compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract as well as quality of the programming offered by LRPs, including any MOUs where they receive direct funding for services from another entity.

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5. A matrix that will enable Probation to collect data and measure the outcomes of LRPs. The matrix should consider recidivism rates, youth success through specific program participation, academic achievement, employment readiness, overall preparedness for self-sufficiency post probation supervision, as well as identifying any barriers to success such as young adults running away from facilities, behavioral and safety challenges, and transfers. This matrix shall include a baseline comparison to the services and programs youth receive while housed at SYTF.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Probation Officer, in collaboration with the District Attorney, the Public Defender, the Alternate Public Defender, the Superior Court, and with technical assistance from OYCR to report back in 120 days with the feasibility of establishing a tiered system for LRP placement that offers varying levels of structure and intervention informed by youth readiness and need. This effort should also provide:

1. Information about the solicitation process for LRP contracts, including standardized expectations, rates, reporting requirements, and service levels.
2. Include a pause on any contract renewals for existing LRPs until the report is issued. This pause is not intended to prohibit the continued use of, or payment to, LRPs currently serving youth, whether pursuant to an existing contract or other funding arrangement. Nor is it intended to prevent youth from being placed in or referred to existing LRPs during this period.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Executive Director of the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CCJCC) to convene a limited term ad hoc working group within 30 days to review LRPs in Los Angeles County, including what authority the County has for oversight, barriers to placement, any safety challenges and develop recommendations that can be used to enhance the LRP framework and report back to the Board in 120 days.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Probation Officer to engage OYCR within 60 days to provide technical assistance to develop training and curriculum for staff about LRPs and provide a written status update to the Board in 90 days.

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KB:scem