

JJCC-CAC Meeting February 26, 2021
Public Comments Submitted via E-mail
Agenda Item V. a

1. Good afternoon JJCC Members, my name is Sophia Cristo and I'm a youth advocate with the Anti Recidivism Coalition and a youth leader with the LA Youth Uprising Coalition. As a young woman who experienced incarceration from the age of 14 - 23, in LA County and the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), I want to strongly and honestly say that the compound aka Barry J Nidorf as an alternative to DJJ would be a **definite regression in our work** to create something new and beneficial to our youth. It just doesn't make sense, the idea of the compound even being taken into consideration as an alternative is horrendous and disappointing. In no way, shape or form does the compound help us move towards the right direction of supporting and helping our youth, something that we actually discussed during the YJWG DJJ workgroup. It's the complete opposite, considering it's a lockdown setting within a juvenile hall, it even has way more restrictions than the current DJJ has, and conforms youth mentality/ behavior to accept and go hand in hand with being held in a prison like environment. Our focus and goal should be on creating a new space that benefits the youth, not continues to hinder and punish them. When you look at the compound, all you see is fences, barbed wired all around, chains, and a secure setting with no programs that truthfully address the problems/challenges that youth face. Imagine how the youth on the inside of that structure feel, and the scenery they view on a daily basis. None of it screams hope, growth, or transformation. It's a constant reminder of punishment, mistakes made as a kid, and feeling hopeless and helpless. I urge you to strongly consider the damage this will have on the youth and reconsider the options we have for creating something new and better, instead of just renaming a lockdown facility where everything remains the same. Please support the YJWG DJJ recommendations. We need real youth justice. Thank you for time

2. Hello my name is Ezekiel Nishiyama I am a youth advocate and community organizer fellow with the Anti Recidivism Coalition. Also a leader with LA Youth Uprising. As a youth who experienced CAs Division of Juvenile Justice I can assure you that the compound - Barry J Nidorf is not the alternative to DJJ. Throughout my incarceration, the compound was one of the worst facilities I experienced. A jail within another jail is what I would call it. Very little programs and opportunities to prepare for my re-entry were provided to me while inside the compound. In moving towards the DJJ transition we should focus on a safe and secure healing center where youth would have the experience to be exposed to many rehabilitative programs. Youth should have access to Career development as well as building on their education upon re-entry back into our community.

The implementation of Credible messengers and Restorative Justice is another big part of what needs to be aligned when we think about how we deal with the trauma that youth are experiencing on the inside. Imagine having people like me, work with these youth. I can assure you I would be more effective in building meaningful trust and relationships with

the youth simply because I actually understand their experience. On the other hand, Probation has failed at doing this and we have not seen what they are doing with their supposed credible messenger programs. What's going on there? The county should ensure we are hiring and employing the right individuals when we are giving them access to our youth futures. We as a county can't continue to keep youth inside these prison-like facilities. Our youth futures should not be housed in the compound, they are still youth and deserve dignity and respect in their development. They are not adults. Thank you for the time given to me today.

3. Hello my name is Alexia Cina and I am a youth advocate and community organizer with the Anti- Recidivism Coalition (ARC) and the LA youth uprising coalition. As a young woman who was incarcerated at the age of 21, for three years, and experienced the trauma of being a young adult incarcerated I am here to stress to you all that probation should NOT use the "compound" known as Barry J as the alternative for DJJ youth incarceration. I'm very disappointed at the fact that probation wants to keep our DJJ youth in this non-healing institution, having them feel even more incarcerated and adding more trauma. This place will be detrimental to their mental health and their self worth. Instead, we must move forward on our work from the Youth Justice Work Group DJJ report and bring that to life. It is crucial that youth like myself along with other community-based organizations serving and working with youth, help guide this process. The JJCC must create this avenue of community and youth engagement as they develop their DJJ alternative plan. This is important in order to help benefit youths' futures. It is time we move away from traditional punishment and set youth on a good path in life. Helping them with their reentry and providing them with the guidance to success and resources they truly need to have bright futures away from crime. These youth have so much potential and talent and simply need the right youth developmental services that can help them get to reach their goals. I urge the JJCC body to listen to the youth that are speaking to you all here today. Thank you.