

JJCC-CAC Meeting June24, 2021 Written Public Comments Agenda Item VI. A

1. Leah Gasser - Ordaz

Hello,

I made verbal public comment but am submitting my full comment for the public record on Item 5a.

Good afternoon, Leah Gasser-Ordaz with UCLA Law's Criminal Justice Program. I am asking you to maintain the DJJ Transition Plan's proposal to use Camps Scott and Scudder to house youth in LA County after July 1.

I want to use my time to discuss who safety applies to and what it means. I've been listening to public comment at this meeting for a while and I hear a lot about how youth in custody need to be locked up to keep communities safe. To me, that's a very narrow view of what safety means. In fact, we know that this traditional view of safety - put young people in cages, put bars on the walls, and use OC spray to keep them in line - doesn't work, doesn't keep the community safe, and doesn't keep the young people in these facilities safe. Data on recidivism, on trauma impacts to youth in facilities, and surveys of community members bear this out.

I don't deny that these methods may make some people FEEL safe, but there's a difference between what FEELS safe, and what actually IS safe.

We need to listen to people who have been harmed by youth housed in these facilities, victims. According to a 2019 statewide study of crime victims, by a nearly 5:1 margin, victims reported that prisons make it more likely someone will commit crimes or has no public safety impact at all. More than 8/10 victims reported that they would prefer to redirect state prison budgets to fund mental health treatment, substance use treatment, and trauma recovery services. Most victims asked for financial assistance; counseling and mental health support; and help understanding the legal system, which they didn't feel like they received after they reported a crime.

We need to listen to young people who have been in these facilities, some of who are here today speaking about their experiences.

Imagine if our community believed in a holistic safety model that cares for both victims and young people that cause harm. Imagine if we all understood that young people that cause harm may also be victims. Safety is not more weapons, more violence, or more walls. Safety starts with breaking the cycle of how we treat youth in facilities, bringing in supports like credible messengers, and creating space for accountability that doesn't involve punishment.

Sticking to the DJJ Transition Report's original plan maintains a safe environment for youth and the community and aligns with the recommendations made in the Youth Justice Reimagined report.

2. John De La Cerda

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing regarding the proposal to house violent juveniles at a low security facility so close to residential properties. Not only has the public not been given reasonable opportunity to respond but a sheriff's review of the facility has found multiple grievous flaws with this facility being considered for violent offenders. This will negatively effect home values as any new home buyer will receive notice of this facility and make them think twice before purchasing. The safety and well being of our community must come first, we have already felt the horror of teen violence which rocked our community to its core. We do not need to have our families, our children held hostage by the constant threat of housed violent teen felons in this area.

3. Diana Anderson

Hello,

I am a concerned citizens of Saugus. Our community just recently found out the plans to force, not work with, our community to house violent juveniles in a facility that is not equipped to house them. This location is extremely close to existing residential homes and new homes slated for construction. It seems like all the trash for Los Angeles county gets dumped into Santa Clarita. I don't mean that these violent juveniles are the trash, I mean that anything Los Angeles City and the surrounding communities don't want to have or deal with gets sent here. We will have to deal with increased strain on Bouquet Cyn Rd where Camp Scudder and Scott are located on a 2 lane road, an increased in the strain on water as we have constant restrictions, a strain on our power grid we do have rolling blackouts and ultimately the most important part the fear of these violent juveniles escaping into our community. In addition, that section of Bouquet Cyn has been evacuated numerous times due to out of control wildfires, where would these juveniles go during the evacuations? Would they be placed at a higher priority than existing residents that also have children? Bouquet Cyn is gridlock during an evacuation.

Where are these juveniles being sent from? Other communities? Santa Clarita must not be forced to bear the responsibility for other communities that have not addressed the problems with juveniles that are and have lived violent lives. Our community has juveniles like that too, but each community should be responsible for addressing the needs of their juveniles. Most importantly each community's leadership needs to be responsible for what kind of involvement they have with their youth, adolescent and adult members.

I live a very short distance from this unplanned atrocity in our community and it gives me much apprehension for all the reasons and strains on our community.

4. Christine Rodgers

Addressing: Changes to Camp Joseph Scott and Camp Kenyon Scudder in Bouquet Canyon

Please hear our Major Concerns in the potential housing of violent offenders at Camp Joseph Scott and Camp Kenyon Scudder in Bouquet Canyon. My husband and I moved to Santa Clarita in 2010 for the community and safety of raising a family here. We moved to Saugus with 2 little kids about 5 years ago and love our neighborhood, especially since our kids can play safely outside. If Camp Joseph Scott and Camp Kenyon Scudder are now being considered to house violent offenders, then we may be forced to relocate our home (which we don't want to do, we love Santa Clarita). Many of our neighbors and friends in the area are concerned with this idea and would consider moving as well. The safety of our families are our main priority, regardless of how the facilities are updated to make them more secure. Here are our concerns.

1. The fact the Camps are so close residents (almost next door for some) is the major reason this should not happen – the impact on public safety.
2. Additional people coming into the area that don't belong here and may not be here for the right reasons. Increase in crime.
3. More traffic on Bouquet.
4. Loss in property value!!
5. Safety, did I mention that?

Again, Santa Clarita/Saugus is not the place for these camps with the nearby schools and families living right down the road. This type of facility should be set further away from homes, schools, businesses, etc. to ensure the safety of the community. We did not move here to live next door to a violent offenders correctional facility and think this is not right. My family and neighbors respectfully and passionately

request you reconsider and find a more suitable location for violent offenders because this is not it. Thank you.

5. Ahmad Alkilani
Saugus resident.

Public objection to moving juvenile offenders to Saugus and creating a high security prison next to a residential tract. Have we not had enough tragedy, remembered Saugus high shootings, in what is deemed to be a safe neighborhood and good place to raise your kids?

We pay enough state and local taxes that this, in my opinion, should not even be entertained. The money is better spent helping these juveniles in correction, training & guidance as opposed to using it to upgrade a facility to high security in the heart of a residential community. The state's actions on this are appalling. Not to mention the attempt to push this through a meeting without adequate notice or even public opinion.

6. Sue Fischer

My name is Sue Fischer. I live on Shadow Valley Lane across the road from the camps. This email is addressing the Santa Clarita City Council and L.A. County. May I first make note that the public of Santa Clarita has been lied to. We were told on Tuesday that this proposal would be put on hold until January of 2022. We were told that Joann Barger was against this proposal. This meeting today appears to be purposefully hidden.

First of all, it is obvious to say that we are a small enclave of homes. A true family neighborhood with schools all around us. We basically have few roads leading out. We also live in a fire zone. It is hard enough for us, the residents, to evacuate in case of a fire. How will hardened prisoners be evacuated?

You state this is a juvenile camp. These prisoners are not juveniles. They are ages 18-24 and have committed serious crimes. Most likely not their first crime either. This is a highly inappropriate area to house these men. I bought my home new; over 30 years ago. The thought behind our purchase is what we have had: a quiet, family neighborhood.

This part of California has many wide open places, such as the desert. Why would you move such a facility to a small, packed in community? Why would you make this decision obviously behind the back of Santa Clarita residents?

I will be listening in to the meeting at 2pm that you quietly attempted to hide. I hope to hear our city deny this proposal as they said they would do.

Ps I was obviously unable to send this email well ahead of 2pm per your lack of transparency.