

Rebecca Woodson, President
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Susan Jones, Commissioner
Sarah Ching Ting Wan, Commissioner



City and County of San Francisco
Juvenile Probation Commission

William Siffermann
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

February 09, 2011

The Honorable Edwin M. Lee
City Hall, Room 200
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Lee:

On February 9, 2011, by unanimous vote, the members of the Juvenile Probation Commission approved the following letter, and authorized me to forward it immediately to your attention. As we have in the past, the Juvenile Probation Commission would like to continue to express its deepest concern regarding further budget reductions from the Juvenile Probation Department (Department). We understand that the ongoing dire economic condition of our City means that difficult decisions must be made by all departments, and we truly appreciate the economic challenges and fiscal realities your office faces given the City's ever-increasing expenses and shrinking State and Federal revenue. As we work to meet the budget requirements imposed on the Department, we must remain true to our highest priority: serving the youth of San Francisco. If the Department reduces its budget by the Budget Year Target of \$5.1 million, the impact would directly affect the Department's ability to provide its core services – custodial care, investigation and assessment, community supervision, effective placements, detention alternatives and gender-specific programming – for our youth.

As you know, the Juvenile Probation Department has been given a 20% budget reduction target for the coming fiscal year, which represents \$5.1 million, and an overall reduction target of 30%, which representing \$7.6 million. The Department is already in crisis mode financially, having continually reduced its budget over successive years, with a \$\$\$\$\$ million decrease in the last fiscal year alone. While the Commission has approved the Department's recommended budget reduction plan for fiscal year 2011-2012 – totaling \$608,000, and thereby resulting in the layoff or time reduction of Department employees and, consequently, a significant decrease the Department's ability to serve its youth and the public. Specifically, ****INSERT HERE****The Department would be unable to continue implementation of innovative approaches to youth rehabilitation, community partnering and violence prevention. These cuts further short-circuit long-term plans and the strategic vision of the Department to improve outcomes for youth and public safety services.

The Commission strongly urges you to reject the proposed cuts, and allow the Department to maintain essential core services to our City's youth and families. The Juvenile Probation Department is charged with helping the City's most vulnerable youth – those who have lost their way, and look to the Department and its dedicated staff to build their confidence and faith in themselves, complete their education, obtain job skills and make other significant changes necessary to create a better future outside the criminal justice system. We cannot simply abandon these young men and women to an uncertain future lacking in support and necessary services. Creative solutions such as those proposed by the Department's budget staff must be supported. We appreciate your consideration of this letter, and look forward to working closely with your office as we wrestle with the City's ongoing fiscal challenges.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Woodson, President
Juvenile Probation Commission

cc: Chief William Siffermann
Matthew Goudeau