

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 11



City and County of San Francisco

JOHN AVALOS

December 31, 2012

Chief probation Officer William Sifferman
San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department
375 Woodside Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94127

Dear Chief Sifferman,

It has been brought to my attention that there is a proposal that will be presented to the Juvenile Probation Commission requesting that Juvenile Probation Officers be allowed to carry firearms. While I understand the need to provide safety measures for your staff, I find it hard to believe that bringing more guns into this City will improve the efforts of your staff or in any way increase their ability to do their jobs in a more effective, efficient, or safe manner.

I would like to request that you provide me with a better understanding of what incident, if any, prompted this decision and whether it is necessary for your staff to participate in operations with S.F.P.D. that may jeopardize the safety of your staff. Can you cite any studies or research that leads you to believe that a P.O. carrying a firearm is in fact any safer than those that don't? In order to feel better informed about the matter I would like to see something in writing that will outline and detail how you plan to implement this approach and at what cost. I would also like to request that there be some public discourse with all the necessary stakeholders to discuss and determine whether this measure is good for the City and County of San Francisco.

Considering that the task of JPD P.O.'s is to supervise the youth that become wards of the court using "data-driven decision-making" interventions "to ensure positive outcomes" it is difficult to understand how taking this measure will improve your P.O.'s ability to do their jobs better and feel safer. In light of recent national developments with regards to firearms it is important for us to consider alternatives that create safety for all San Francisco residents without automatically resorting to an armed force. If, as indicated in your values, vision, and mission statement, "effective partnerships with all Juvenile Justice stakeholders is key to systemic success" and "community voices/input help guide quality assurance and future direction" then I believe it to be imperative that we have additional dialogue with all stakeholders before moving forward with this proposal.

Sincerely,


JOHN AVALOS