

**City and County of San Francisco**

**Juvenile Probation Commission**

**Joseph Arellano**, Acting President  
**Margaret Brodtkin**, Commissioner  
**Suzy Jones**, Commissioner  
**Daniela Maldonado**, Commissioner  
**Jess Montejano**, Commissioner  
**Toye Moses**, Commissioner  
**James Spingola**, Commissioner



**Allen Nance**  
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

May 9, 2019

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
City Hall, Room 244  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

On May 8, 2019, by unanimous vote, the members of the Juvenile Probation Commission (JPC) approved this letter in response to the ordinance introduced on April 9, 2019 to amend the Administrative Code to close Juvenile Hall by December 31, 2021. The JPC acknowledges the potentially negative impact of incarceration on youth, and commends the Supervisors' willingness to take bold action to reform the juvenile justice system in San Francisco. However, we believe that an emphasis on an evidence informed comprehensive plan, and not on closing Juvenile Hall, would enable thoughtful consideration of all strategic options to yield the best results - mitigating the risk of destabilizing the juvenile justice system in San Francisco and putting youth in further jeopardy of entering the criminal justice system.

Juvenile Hall's incorporation of more relevant, evidence-based programming over the past 10 years, as well as more effective partnerships with on-site and external CBOs, has enhanced its ability to stabilize and rehabilitate youth. As a result, there were approximately 700 youth bookings into Juvenile Hall in 2018 who were provided behavioral health, medical and/or academic services in a structured environment - 25% of which were from neighboring counties. These reforms, and the adoption of policies enabling increased parental involvement and limiting the time youth spend confined in their rooms, have set San Francisco Juvenile Hall apart from its peers in California.

That said, there is great need for additional reforms to the juvenile justice system to better serve our youth and further reduce recidivism. Youth of color, particularly African American and Latino youth, are still disproportionately affected by exposure to crime and violence, limited access to resources, and unstable living situations – a disturbing fact that must be addressed if meaningful change is going to occur in San Francisco. These youth represent some of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community. They warrant careful consideration of a plan that can adequately assess their individual needs using data-driven methods, and timely, culturally competent and sensitive services.

Therefore, the JPC urges the development of a well thought-out, comprehensive, strategic plan that incorporates a diversity of voices, and considers the well-being of youth affected by our juvenile justice policies, their families, victims of crime, and the residents of San Francisco, prior to any action to close Juvenile Hall.

The JPC shares your commitment to juvenile justice reform and looks forward to supporting the Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Panel to ensure a smooth transition for our youth, and potentially allow San Francisco to serve as a model for the rest of the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Arellano".

Joseph Arellano, Acting President  
Juvenile Probation Commission

cc: The Honorable London N. Breed, Mayor  
Allen Nance, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer  
Sean Elsbernd, Chief of Staff