

1 [Urging Access to the Juvenile Justice Center's Outdoor Recreation Areas]

2 **RESOLUTION URGING THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO ASSURE THAT THE**
3 **JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT CAN PROVIDE ITS DETAINEES REGULAR AND SAFE**
4 **ACCESS TO THE OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS.**

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6 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department opened a newly constructed
7 Juvenile Justice Center on December 31st, 2006, which was the result of a \$47.4 million renovation
8 project;¹ and

9 WHEREAS, The renovated Juvenile Justice Center facility includes a new, large outdoor
10 recreation areas, consisting of a soccer field (with grass grown on the field!), tetherball poles, a small t-
11 ball/kick-ball area, a volley ball area, and two basketball courts; and

12 WHEREAS, These outdoor recreation areas have been tremendously under-utilized for the
13 past five years; and

14 WHEREAS, In response to the question of why detainees have not been granted regular
15 access to the outdoor, the Juvenile Probation Department asserts that current staffing levels are
16 insufficient to ensure resident safety and to provide proper supervision and that the fence behind the
17 outdoor recreation areas wasn't built high enough to prevent the possibility of contraband being thrown
18 into the yard for detainees; and

19 WHEREAS, According to the "Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities" laid out in the
20 California Code of Regulations, "The exercise program [of juvenile detention facilities] shall include the
21 opportunity for at least one hour of outdoor physical activity each day, weather permitting. In the event
22 weather does not permit outdoor physical activity, at least one hour each day of exercise involving
23 large muscle activities shall be provided;"² and

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25 ¹ "S.F. sues architects of over-budget juvenile hall," San Francisco *Chronicle*, March 30, 2009,
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/03/29/BAN716O7E5.DTL>.

² Cal. Admin. Code tit. 15, § 1371 (d).

1 WHEREAS, The state standards go on to say that, “Juvenile facilities shall provide the
2 opportunity for recreation and exercise a minimum of three hours a day during the week and five hours
3 a day each Saturday, Sunday or other non-school days, of which one hour shall be large muscle
4 exercise, as noted in item (d) above. Such recreation and exercise schedule shall be posted in the
5 living units;”³ and

6 WHEREAS, Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that is produced in the skin and activated by
7 absorbing direct sunlight, which can prevent health defects like depression, anxiety, osteoporosis,
8 various types of cancer, prostate cancer, etc. Vitamin D cannot be absorbed through glass which
9 means that one must be outside to benefit from the nutrient and avoid vitamin d deficiency;⁴ and

10 WHEREAS, Populations of incarcerated youth are more susceptible to psychological
11 complications like depression and anxiety than free youth and intensive aerobic exercise has been
12 scientifically proven to improve self-esteem, social behavior, and battle depression and anxiety, and
13 while less intense physical activity can be helpful, it isn't as effective as really intense aerobic large
14 muscle activity;⁵ and

15 WHEREAS, The California Code of Regulations also says, “Each juvenile facility shall:
16 have an adequate number of personnel sufficient to carry out its program, to provide for safety and
17 security of minors and staff, and meet established standards and regulations [and] ensure that no
18 required services shall be denied because of insufficient numbers of staff on duty absent exigent
19 circumstances;”⁶ and

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³ Cal. Admin. Code tit. 15, § 1371 (e).

23 ⁴ “Vitamin D myths, facts, and statistics,” Mike Adams,
<http://www.naturalnews.com/003069.html#ixzz1kd1eHAhJ>.

24 ⁵ “The psychological benefits of exercise and the treatment of delinquent adolescents.” JR MacMahon. *Sports*
Med. 1990 Jun;9(6):344-51. Review.

25 ⁶ Cal. Admin. Code tit. 15, § 1321 (a) and (b).

1 WHEREAS, The Code goes on to say that, “Staffing shall be in compliance with a minimum
2 child-staff ratio for the following facility types [...] during the hours that minors are awake, one wide-
3 awake child supervision staff member on duty for each 10 minors in detention;” and

4 WHEREAS, At the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department’s Juvenile Justice Center,
5 there are three counselors on duty for each unit, and each unit has at maximum twenty detainees; and

6 WHEREAS, The mission of the Juvenile Probation Department is “to serve the needs of youth
7 and families who are brought to [the department’s] attention with care and compassion; to identify and
8 respond to the individual risks and needs presented by each youth; to engage fiscally sound and
9 culturally competent strategies that promote the best interests of the youth; to provide victims with
10 opportunities for restoration; to identify and utilize the least restrictive interventions and placements
11 that do not compromise public safety; to hold youth accountable for their actions while providing them
12 with opportunities and assisting them to develop new skills and competencies; and contribute to the
13 overall quality of life for the citizens of San Francisco within the sound framework of public safety as
14 outlined in the Welfare & Institutions Code;”⁷ now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of
16 Supervisors to assure that the Juvenile Probation Department can provide detainees with regular
17 access to the large outdoor recreation area at the Juvenile Justice Center that was rebuilt for their use,
18 such that detainees can enjoy the health and psychological benefits of outdoor large muscle activity,
19 and the Juvenile Probation Department can be sure it is following the California state regulations on
20 “Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities” that lay out the requisite recreation and exercise programs
21 and staffing levels, as well as the Department’s own mission.

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⁷ Juvenile Probation Department website, <http://sfgov3.org/index.aspx?page=2262>.