

1 [Urging the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to Urge the San Francisco Juvenile Probation
2 Department Not to Equip SOP Unit Probation Officers with Firearms]
3 **Resolution urging the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to urge the San Francisco Juvenile**
4 **Probation Department not to equip probation officers in the Serious Offender Unit with**
5 **firearms.**

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7 WHEREAS, At the January 9, 2013 meeting of the San Francisco Juvenile Probation
8 Commission, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer William P. Siffermann announced, subsequent to a
9 presentation by Assistant Chief Allan Nance entitled “Juvenile Probation Officer Field Safety and
10 Monitoring Compliance: The Changing Landscape of Community Corrections and Supervisor of High
11 Risk Offenders,” that he was “examining those existing safety measures provided to Juvenile
12 Probation Officers” who work with the most violent and highest-risk youth, and that he planned to
13 develop a revised safety protocol for the Juvenile Probation Department’s (JPD) probation officers to
14 be announced sometime in April 2013; and it has been reported¹ that one possible such revision will
15 be equipping probation officers in the Serious Offender Program (SOP) unit with firearms; and

16 WHEREAS, While one of the stated values and beliefs of the JPD is that “data-driven decision-
17 making ensures positive outcomes,”² the necessity of equipping juvenile probation officers with
18 firearms has not yet been substantiated by any body of evidence, nor has evidence been presented
19 suggesting that arming juvenile probation officers with firearms will lead to a reduction in violent
20 incidents or an enhancement of public safety; and

21 WHEREAS, One of the main premises behind making the Juvenile Probation Department
22 (JPD) an entity separate and distinct from other adult law enforcement agencies—an act that
23 distinguishes San Francisco from all other counties in the state of California—was the importance of

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25 ¹ “SF juvenile probation chief explores arming officers,” Amy Julia Harris, December 21, 2012, *The Bay Citizen*,
<https://www.baycitizen.org/news/crime/youth-probation-officers-sf-may-get-guns>.

² <http://sfgov3.org/index.aspx?page=2262>

1 differentiating JPD from an armed approach to juvenile justice, and also to provide a more specialized
2 focus on youth rehabilitative service needs; and

3 WHEREAS, Chief Siffermann has repeatedly argued that revisions to JPD's safety protocol are
4 a result of state criminal and juvenile justice realignment, and he has repeatedly referred to a
5 potentially fatal incident on September 20, 2012 in which juvenile probation officers, working in tandem
6 with San Francisco Police Department police officers, encountered a violent youth probationer, as an
7 example of the need for a revised safety protocol;³ and

8 WHEREAS, There is a lack of clarity on the need for JPD probation officers to participate in
9 operations that would seem to categorically fall under the purview of the City's law enforcement
10 strategies (like the September 22, 2012 incident) and the participation of JPD probation officers in
11 such operations would seem to expose these officers to unnecessary risks and dangers; and

12 WHEREAS, The Deputy Probation Officers Association (DPOA), the labor organization
13 representing the interests of the Probation Officers whose caseloads include these high risk juveniles,
14 has recommended that a "renewed focus on training of officers for these new, more dangerous
15 situations, should be emphasized;"⁴ and

16 WHEREAS, The Youth Commission acknowledges and appreciates Chief Siffermann
17 responsibility to ensure that the men and women under his command are safe and that revisions to the
18 probation officer safety protocol are likely necessary; now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of
20 Supervisors to urge the Juvenile Probation Department not to begin arming juvenile probation officers
21 with firearms as part of any revised probation officer safety protocol; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of
23 Supervisors to urge the Juvenile Probation Department to identify practical tools and alternative
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25 ³For example, Chief Siffermann's February 4, 2013 letter to Supervisor Norman Yee.

⁴ <http://sfgov3.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=3641>

1 practices other than firearms that will help to address the personal safety concerns for probation
2 officers whose caseloads include high-risk juveniles; and be it finally

3 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of
4 Supervisors to urge the Juvenile Probation Department, per the DPOA's recommendation, to provide
5 new training of probation officers who will supervise high-risk juveniles.

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