

1 At its regular meeting of March 17, 2014, the Youth Commission adopted the following motion:

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3 ***The Youth Commission calls on the Board of Supervisors to hold a timely hearing regarding***  
4 ***the unmet needs of youth with an incarcerated parent(s) and various City departments***  
5 ***(including but not limited to the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families; the Juvenile***  
6 ***Probation Department, the Adult Probation Department, the Human Services Agency) efforts to***  
7 ***provide services and support for young people with incarcerated parents.***

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9 Supplemental Information

10 According to the 2011 DCYF Community Needs Assessment, 17,993 children and youth were  
11 estimated to have had a parent who spent time in either county jail or state prison in 2010.<sup>1</sup> As this  
12 number does not include youth and children who had a parent that was incarcerated at any time during  
13 their childhood, and does not include transitional age youth, parental incarceration may affect an even  
14 greater number of San Francisco's young people.

15 Recognizing that three decades of high incarceration have not made our communities safer,  
16 the San Francisco's District Attorney, Adult Probation Department, and Juvenile Probation Department  
17 have all begun to pursue alternatives to out-of-home detention for both youth and adults. This has led  
18 to a drop in the overall population at the San Francisco county jail,<sup>2</sup> Juvenile Hall,<sup>3</sup> and a drop in the

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21 <sup>1</sup> 1,797 San Francisco children had a parent in California State prison. An estimated 16,196 San Francisco  
22 children had a parent in custody for some period of time in 2010 at San Francisco County Jails. See: San  
23 Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, "2011 Community Needs Assessment," Published  
24 May 2011 and available at: <http://www.dcyf.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=11> , Page 101.

25 <sup>2</sup> The San Francisco jail population in 2008 was 2,015. In 2013 it was 1,413, with 1,127 would-be prisoners in  
diversion. See: Roberts, Chris, "Smaller new jail might meet SF's needs, report finds," Published in the *San  
Francisco Examiner*, January 24, 2014. Retrieved on February 28, 2014 at:  
<http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/smaller-new-jail-might-meet-sfs-needs-report-finds/Content?oid=2686090>

<sup>3</sup> At a February 19, 2014 meeting with youth commissioners, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Allen Nance reported a 40% reduction in the population at Juvenile Hall over the last five years.

1 number of charges filed for non-violent drug offenses.<sup>4</sup> The San Francisco Board of Supervisors also  
2 recently recognized the need to curb discrimination against formerly incarcerated people with the  
3 passage of File #131192, the Fair Chance ordinance, on February 11, 2014.

4 Alongside these notable efforts, youth commissioners and youth advocates with Project WHAT  
5 (We Are Here and Talking), a youth leadership program working with children of incarcerated parents,  
6 recognize an outstanding need to review how reliance on incarceration has affected a generation of  
7 young people, and specifically, the impact of parental incarceration on the wellbeing and life outcomes  
8 of young people in San Francisco.

9 We urge the Board of Supervisors to hold a hearing to investigate issues including, but not  
10 limited to: Efforts to collect data on needs and outcomes of youth with incarcerated parents who  
11 access city services; Notifying families and children when parents are transferred and/or released from  
12 jail or prison; What type of additional support services are offered and/or needed to support the health,  
13 wellbeing, and educational success of youth with incarcerated parents; Efforts to mitigate stigma and  
14 discrimination against formerly imprisoned people and its' impact on families; Protocols for arrests of  
15 adults in front of children or youth and support for youth during and after the arrest and litigation  
16 process; Programs and services specifically designed to support and build the leadership of youth with  
17 incarcerated parents; Phone call and family- and child-visiting privileges and policies that affect the  
18 ability of youth to see and speak to their incarcerated parent; Support services for parents in both the  
19 adult probation and juvenile probation departments; Considerations of family impact at the time of  
20 sentencing and during parole hearings; Considerations regarding placement and proximity of parents  
21 with children placed in out-of-home detention; The effect of parental incarceration on youth and family  
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24 <sup>4</sup> District Attorney George Gascon, at his February 27, 2014 Public Safety Address acknowledged that our  
25 communities were no safer as a result of decades of high incarceration rates. He announced that in 2009, 63%  
of charges filed in San Francisco were for drug offenses and that in 2013, that figure had dropped to 32% as a  
result of efforts to distinguish violent vs. nuisance offenses. For an overview of his address see:  
<http://www.sfdistrictattorney.org/index.aspx?page=338>

1 housing stability and the impact of incarceration on the City's anti-displacement efforts; And family  
2 impacts of parental deportations as a result of incarceration.

3 Even though law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system, and Child Protective  
4 Services regularly interface with children when their parents are arrested or incarcerated, it is our  
5 impression that no agency is charged with comprehensively collecting data about the prevalence of  
6 children with incarcerated parents, their wellbeing, how they are affected, or what additional services  
7 they may need.

8 We see an urgent need to review existing policies and develop concerted efforts to meet the  
9 unique needs of children with incarcerated parents.

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18 Nicholas Persky

19 2013-2014 Youth Commission Chair

20 Adopted by Youth Commission March 17, 2014

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