

Public comment on Item V: Discussion Items, F. Determination of Suitability:

Hello,

My name is Shayna Hahn, I'm a Master of Social Work intern at the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC). As we witness this cycle of the same model of juvenile facilities being created and shut down due to unsuitable and inhumane conditions, there's a critical need to shift the approach we're taking. These youth are dealing with trauma, resource scarcity, community violence, substance use, mental health concerns, and more - these are the contexts that contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system in the first place, and they will not be resolved without a genuine investment in the livelihood and well-being of these young people.

In my clinical work as a therapist, I see people in their 20's, 30's, 40's, and 50's, that were incarcerated as teens and never had the opportunity to receive the support they needed - this leaves them without the skills and tools necessary to reintegrate into society as healthy individuals and increases the likelihood of recidivism. Are we setting up our youth for a lifetime of incarceration or a chance to learn, heal, and grow into better versions of themselves?

Alternatives such as those proposed by Youth Justice Reimagined are undeniably necessary to foster positive change. Yes, Barry J. Nidorf and Los Padrinos Juvenile Halls should be found unsuitable, but we **MUST** have viable alternatives in place that have the best interest of these youth at the forefront. The Board of Supervisors in Los Angeles County, along with the community and stakeholders have already approved the Youth Justice Reimagined plan including decarceration efforts / structured release, credible messengers, YES teams, and safe healing centers. It is time to commit to this plan and be proactive about the future of our youth.

Best,
Shayna Hahn



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To the Board of State and Community Corrections,

I am writing this to support a finding of unsuitability for the juvenile detention facilities in Los Angeles County. For far too many years our youth have suffered in continuously deteriorating conditions, with little to no opportunities for self-development or rehabilitation. These are human beings who are in the most critical stage of their emotional and psychological development, where they are forced to reside in rooms with no toilet facilities. On a regular basis you have only 11% of the staff showing up for their assigned shifts, which often forces children, young children, to expel waste in the corner of their living space because there aren't any staff to open their doors to allow them to use the restroom.

This lack of staff has been a direct contributing factor to the death of at least one child who was in custody, because the lack of staff has resulted in the complete failure to carry out required 15-30 minute welfare checks on the youth. This is beyond unacceptable. The children have no classrooms in which to learn, and no staff to provide observation for them to have classes. I don't know how this has been tolerated for so long, but such deplorable conditions need to end, and the only way to do that is for the Los Angeles facilities to be deemed unsuitable, and for the Probation department to be compelled to do everything humanly possible to rectify the problems that plague this system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly

Jared M. Villery

Hello Adam,

Here is my written comment for **Item V: ACTION: DISCUSSION ITEMS**
F. Determination of Suitability – Los Angeles County Juvenile Detention Facilities

My name is Sie Romero, I work for the Los Angeles Youth Uprising Coalition. I have the incredible privilege and unique opportunity to work with youth advocates and leaders from Los Angeles County. My team is made up of educators, policy movers, lawyers, organizers that are system impacted, previously incarcerated and have worked in the field of youth justice for a number of years.

It has been made apparent to me, and the rest of the public, how subjective criminality and the law is - in your case. If the youth incarcerated received the same leniency and understanding that you extend to the probation department, more than half would not be incarcerated. The only difference is your leniency and continued denial of noncompliance and unsuitability of these facilities is at the expense of young people's lives.

LA County's Board of Supervisors has recognized that their probation department cannot be fixed, they have unanimously agreed that the best path to youth and community safety lies in **Youth Justice Reimagined**, a shift away from probation and toward community and youth development centered approaches. We need full throttle commitment to the new vision for Youth Justice and investment in on-going efforts for Youth Justice Reimagined. (Should be attached to the agenda). It is time to stop relying on LA Probation and instead insist that LA County prioritize community alternatives that are rooted in public health, youth development and racial equity.

These facilities have been out of compliance for over **175 days** and the young people inside cannot wait any longer for definitive action. You must find these halls unsuitable TODAY. Since 2021, this Board has known about ongoing non-compliance in Los Angeles County but has continued extending timelines to accommodate the LA probation department's requests for leniency. We are now in 2024 discussing the same issues all over again. With an unsuitability finding:

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- **It is unacceptable to transfer youth out of county**
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- **It is unacceptable for youth to be under Sheriff deputy supervision**
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- **We will not accept the reopening of harmful probation facilities**
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Considering the horrendous conditions the board has enabled for far too long in Los Angeles County, we urge you to *imagine a day* where accountability and change does not falsely rely on the punishment and imprisonment of young people. The data shows that the accountability we seek cannot be achieved this way.

Thank you for your time.

Sie Romero

BSCC comment 2.15.2024

Board of State and Community Corrections 2.15.2024

Thank You BSCC for this opportunity and for your efforts towards transformative restorative justice. My name is Sir James Bailey. Artist, Activist, Educator, Evangelist residing in the county of Los Angeles. We align with JusticeLA, Los Angeles Youth UpRising, Menformation Project, Poor Peoples' Campaign, Humanity in Harmony holistically. Borrowing from the metaphor in a recent LA Times article, Today we have the responsibility to shut down the LA County Juvenile Hall Shell Game. After over 175 days out of compliance, after receiving millions upon millions of dollars, after all the citizens of LA county expected in passing Measure J back in November of 2020 - It is imperative this Board find Los Padrinos and Barry J Nidorf SYTF unsuitable, requiring immediate closure....

And as importantly work with LA County Board of Supervisors and Community Based Organizations to fully fund Youth Justice Reimagined and Department of Youth Development which moves moves resources away away away from Probation and Prisons to Community Based Restoration and Transformation.

Yesterday's senate hearing on these matters revealed understandings or perhaps better said misunderstandings challenging this movement of monies.

A probation representative told the Senate that their department, the probation department IS the primary Community Based Organization because the staff comes from the community and possess experiential knowledge of the trauma informed care required for healing and restoration. We all have a part to play in reimagining Los Angeles and most of us at least periodically unconscious of systemic roots of trauma prolonged by our own practices. Police and Probation Officers, as kind and caring as one might be, are no exception.

The probation representative said they added the letter "us" to their "camp" and that now makes these places a campus.... It would be funny, if it were not deadly serious... Real serious CBO's are working to get these youths on East LA College, Southwest College, Cal State Northridge and UC Irvine campuses.

And making reference to the book of Genesis in the Bible, Probation claims the Community, like those building the Tower of Babel have a common language of healing, reconciliation, transformation and restoration that if we would "Reimaging" with Probation at the top leading the healing process would be successful "Nothing we can't do with these young people".

No no no, Los Padrinos was closed in 2019 due to unfit conditions yet CBO's working with probation are told things weren't this bad before "another" entity took over.

Who took over? When? Who wants to take over? Not the CBO's - Not Sir James Bailey

We Want Our Future Free. Free. Free. Shut Down All Halls and set our children Free. Free our futures from Gladiator Fight Clubs, 3,000 sexual abuse claims, and drug overdoses such as beloved Bryan Diaz (rest in power)

A senator asked where does the buck stop? With LA Board of Supervisor or with Probation?

We say let it not stop anywhere but flow and not flow down from some tower of babel run by probation but flow around the restorative, transformative healing fields we build.

Isaiah 53:6 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

Isaiah 61:1&4 - The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound...And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Malcolm X said when We replace I even or Illness becomes Wellness- Free Our Future - Youth Justice Reimagined Give Thanks Always,
sir

Public comment on Item V: Discussion Items, F. Determination of Suitability:

- The determination of unsuitability should be a given at this point. It should be evident to everyone in this room that with:
 - over 3,000 claims of sexual abuse
 - Probation prompted fight clubs that result in additional felony charges
 - The passing of Brian Diaz and countless other overdoses
 - Youth missing classes for weeks at a time or urinating in their cells because of officers not showing up to their shift
- {Shifting culture is NOT ENOUGH} **Probation is too far embedded in a culture of abuse and neglect for it to be “corrected”**
- So the question I want to pose is, now what?
- Giving probation another yet another pass is not a solution. Hiring more staff just so they can call out is not a solution. Shuffling youth around from one facility to another is not a solution. More threats of punishment and additional charges further entrenching them in a cycle of harm and incarceration is not a solution.
- LA has already illuminated another path forward that has been initiated by community, adopted by the LA Board of Supervisors, and embraced by stakeholders. And that vision is called Youth Justice Reimagined.
- California has an opportunity to set a new precedent through YJR
 - Starting with expediting decarceration and structured release (an effort already put in motion by supervisor Holly Mitchell of the 2nd district)
 - Investing in more credible messengers, mentors with lived experience who can best guide with system impacted youth
 - Resourcing YES teams to disrupt the school to prison pipeline and provide stronger systems of support for youth in schools
 - Piloting safe healing centers to create alternatives that are rooted in care, resources, and healing
- I implore to make a different decision today. To imagine other possibilities than the ones that have already failed us time and time again.

Public comment on Item V: Discussion Items, F. Determination of Suitability:

Hello, my name is Olivia Shields with Urban Peace Institute and LA Youth Uprising Coalition. After three years of ongoing non-compliance, it should be abundantly clear to the Board that relying on Probation is NOT a solution. Asking for more staff who won't show up and putting theoretical Band-Aids on issues like rampant sexual abuse, Probation organized fight clubs, continuous overdoses that resulted in the death of Bryan Diaz DOES NOT WORK. There is no "fixing" Probation because their fundamental culture of punishment and harm is not how we hold young people accountable while supporting their growth and healing.

Barry J. Nidorf and Los Padrinos are unsuitable for youth and the only solution is Youth Justice Reimagined. This vision, co-created with the very youth who had to endure these horrendous facilities, has resounding County support and is currently in implementation. Safe Healing Centers, home like settings that serve as a concrete alternative to youth incarceration, are on the cusp of being piloted. Credible messengers with lived experience currently provide transformational mentorship to youth in facilities and will only expand their reach. Early structured release is a mechanism, put in motion by Supervisor Mitchell, to free youth safely and early to receive community support. YJR, rooted in public health, youth development, and racial equity, is the only way to break this cycle of non-compliance and truly achieve safety and care for our youth.

Olivia Shields (she/her)

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Public comment on Item V: Discussion Items, F. Determination of Suitability:

#1 The BSCC must work with LA County in supporting the true corrective action plan that has already been approved by the LA Board of Supervisors, community, and stakeholders, it's called Youth Justice Reimagined and it requires shifting resources into community care and alternatives to LA Probation.

- You can use your power today to truly care for these young people by making a finding of unsuitability and urging LA County to FINALLY fund and build alternatives to this failed department.
- LA County's Board of Supervisors has recognized that their probation department cannot be fixed, they have unanimously agreed that the best path to youth and community safety lies in **Youth Justice Reimagined**, a shift away from probation and toward community and youth development centered approaches.
- Three different chiefs, millions of dollars to renovate Los Padrinos, and the "full backing" of the Los Angeles County CEO and Board of Supervisors still wasn't enough to usher the department into compliance, we need a new approach but with the same kind of ferocious investment. **It should be clear to everyone that the problem is this department - it's not just the chief, it's not a lack of funds, it's not a lack of time.**
- We need full throttle commitment to the new vision for Youth Justice and investment in on-going efforts for Youth Justice Reimagined:
 - **Decarceration Efforts / Structured Release**- Supervisor Mitchell passed a motion last March that outlined a process to systematically review youth cases and release them. This process should be evaluated and strengthened to ensure as many youth as possible can be freed and receive support in the community.
 - **Credible messengers**- Resources should be poured into supporting the Department of Youth Development to effectively expand the Credible Messenger program, which brings folks with lived experience with the criminal legal system into facilities to provide transformational mentorship to youth inside.
 - **YES teams**- Youth Empowerment and Support Teams offer crisis response and comprehensive support to youth and their families, envisioned to operate in schools and in communities within Youth Development Networks. YES Teams

are an alternative to law enforcement response, and provide a new approach to supporting youth experiencing crises, lacking support, and/or navigating the legal system.

- **Safe healing centers-** Safe Healing Centers are a concrete alternative to putting young people inside facilities. Designed to be home-like and centered around healing, love, growth, and accountability, SHCs represent the way we should respond to young people who may temporarily be unsafe to themselves or in their community. The first pilot for Safe Healing Centers will be centered around girls and gender expansive youth, as a first step to fully decarcerating that population of young people.
- It is time to stop relying on LA Probation and instead insist that LA County prioritize community alternatives that are rooted in public health, youth development and racial equity. The only way to break this cycle of non-compliance is fully implementing the County-sanctioned vision set out in Youth Justice Reimagined.

#1.5 Appeal to the opportunity we have to pave the way forward for youth justice in California

- *This state's intention is to lead but at this rate, we're not different from Alabama/Louisiana in our treatment of our young people.*
- We have the opportunity to set a NEW precedent based on healing, safety and basic human morality that has the potential to go beyond California state lines.
- Today we are talking about LA, but youth in every single county are now at risk because the precedent has been set that any probation department in California can operate unsafe halls that do not meet the minimum standards and they will be given a pass until and after the worst happens.
- The hard truth is that no hall or camp is a "suitable" place for young people - if any parent or caregiver treated their children the way probation across California treats young people in their custody, child protective services would immediately step in and strip them of custody.
- Considering the horrendous conditions the board has enabled for far too long in Los Angeles County, **we urge you to imagine a day where accountability and change does not falsely rely on the punishment and imprisonment of young people. The data shows that the accountability we seek cannot be achieved this way.**

#2 The BSCC must find Barry J Nidorf and Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall unsuitable TODAY.

- These facilities have been out of compliance for **over 175 days** and the young people inside cannot wait any longer for definitive action.
- Since 2021, this Board has known about ongoing non-compliance in Los Angeles County, but has continued extending timelines to accommodate the LA probation department's requests for leniency. We are now in 2024 discussing the same issues all over again.
- The BSCC has a duty to all incarcerated youth to act today. The BSCC must commit to prioritizing youth safety over LA Probation's meaningless promises.

#3 LA County Probation has demonstrated a long standing inability to come into compliance. The department's repeated failure to implement a successful Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has corroded public trust and rendered the department unreliable and unaccountable to state mandates.

- Based on their track record, we cannot trust LA Probation to implement any real corrective action plan.
- The conditions inside the halls in LA County are not just a matter of failed compliance inspections, it is a matter of probation's inherent failure to adequately care for the youth in their custody.
- Under probation's care:

- LA County has received **over 3,000 claims of sexual abuse** by probation officers in juvenile facilities.
 - LA County has set aside \$3 billion dollars for the settlement.
- LA Probation Officers have been organizing **Gladiator-style fight clubs**, then charging youth with additional felony charges.
- **Bryan Diaz** died in custody as a result of an overdose and failed safety checks.
- *Young people are missing in person classes for weeks at a time, have visitation revoked without cause, are urinating in their cells at night, and are more likely to be sprayed with OC spray than get a timely visit with their attorney.*
- From Sept 2022-Sept 2023 there were 510 young people in LA facilities, of 510, 228 were on psychotropic medication. That's 45% of young people! They need mental health resources and care not incarceration.
- LA Probation has received extra time, extra money, they have been given every benefit of the doubt, they have sapped BSCC staff resources for technical assistance. And they still cannot operate functional juvenile halls, they still cannot meet your minimum standards.

#4. The BSCC could benefit from more community voices to prevent this cycle from happening again.

- This Board has shown unearned deference to LA probation at the expense of youth safety - it's clear that this Board would benefit from more voices that are connected to the community, who have an understanding and commitment to the wellbeing of our young people.
- This Board could do better by California's youth if it also included more community leaders experienced in finding alternative accountability mechanisms outside of Probation
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Thank you,
Nancy