



DA Diana Becton Issues Statement on Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall, Establishes Reimagine Youth Justice Task Force

By [ECT](#) - Aug 4, 2020

Martinez, Calif. – Today, Contra Costa County District Attorney Diana Becton issued the following statement regarding the status of Contra Costa County’s Juvenile Hall and the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility.

“These are historic times and we have an opportunity and a responsibility to re-imagine our justice system so that our youth have a greater chance to lead successful and enriching lives.

I am forming a Reimagine Youth Justice Task Force, which will include county departmental and community representatives, that will study and make recommendations on the most effective ways to invest in our justice involved youth through restorative, community-based solutions, with an initial focus on developing an effective process for closing Juvenile Hall.

Youth crime has been on a steady decline over the last twenty years, reinforcing the conclusion that moving away from youth incarceration is in the best interest of rehabilitation, public safety, and fiscal responsibility. Research has shown that youth can be better treated and rehabilitated in community contexts where they can retain ties to family, school, and their community. Programming and services which are based in the home or in the community are more successful at holding youth accountable and positively changing behavior than institutional settings.

Despite the steep decline in youth crime and consequent reduction in numbers of incarcerated youth, the money invested into the operation of youth prisons has not been reduced accordingly.

Data shows that the average cost per incarcerated child in Contra Costa Juvenile Hall skyrocketing to over \$473,000 per year.

The Reimagine Youth Justice Task Force will make explicit recommendations for financial investments in community-based services for youth instead of investing in youth prisons which have proven to result in worse outcomes for our children and families. Such an approach will allow for critical re-investments in basic needs such as housing, mental health services, and workforce development as well as support the creation of alternatives to incarcerating children in locked facilities.

In the meantime, we should pause and not take any actions to close the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility until the Task Force has made its recommendations to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

This transition is urgent. The Task Force should finish its efforts by the end of this year and make evidence-based recommendations for the process to close Juvenile Hall to the Board of Supervisors in January 2021. The Task Force will present a proposed timeline and transition process for closing Juvenile Hall and will identify alternative investments for our public dollars into community-based services and programming for youth. Implementing these recommendations will create a safer community and help youth get on the right track in their lives.”

Statement from Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia:

“I support District Attorney Becton’s efforts to reimagine youth justice in our County. We need to move away from institutionalization of young people and instead invest in community based restorative justice solutions which make us safer and are more fiscally responsible.”

Statement from Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover:

I applaud District Attorney Diana Becton's effort to examine restorative justice alternatives to simply incarcerating our county's youth. The factors that lead young people to run afoul of the law are as varied as the youth themselves. In many cases a service oriented approach will achieve much more in rehabilitating and helping them to become productive members of our community."

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