



THE
LOS
ANGELES
REGIONAL
REENTRY
PARTNERSHIP

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

August 3, 2012

Mark Faucette
Amity Foundation
Chair

Honorable Zev Yaroslavsky
Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 821
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles CA 90012

Cheryl Branch
Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches

Dear Chairman Yaroslavsky,

Geoff Henderson
Telecare Corporation

On behalf of the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP), I write to both support your July 24th Board Motion (#12-3351) to significantly expand use of alternatives to incarceration in Los Angeles County and to express our dismay about the July 10th article in the *Los Angeles Times* noting that the Los Angeles Sheriffs Dept. is "... in discussions with two Kern County cities to use their empty jails to house up to 1,000 low-level offenders and is considering talks with two other cities."

Lynne Lyman
Drug Policy Alliance

Jose Rodriguez
Office of LA City Councilmember
Richard Alarcon
Los Angeles Reentry Roundtable

LARRP is a network of 125 public and non-profit agencies concerned with reentry and realignment. I have attached additional information that describes our mission, goals, and scope of work.

Kaile Shilling
Violence Prevention Coalition

Troy Vaughn
Weingart Center Association

We recognize the hard work, innovation, and resources that Los Angeles County and its Sheriffs Dept. have invested in reentry, not solely with the recent AB 109 realignment, but long before, addressing the reintegration of incarcerated residents through such programs as the Community Transition Unit and Jail In-Reach project. However, considering inter-county transfers of jail inmates to small city jails a great distance from Los Angeles defeats the intent of the July 24th motion (#12-3351) sent to Sheriff Baca last week, stating that "It is essential that our County begin to explore prudent, innovative, and carefully thought out alternatives to incarceration."

Peggy Edwards
Executive Director

LARRP Opposes Inter-County and Inter-State Transfers of Jail Inmates
Notwithstanding this clear direction, the Sheriff seems poised to propose sending 1,000 low-level offenders to jails in Kern County. This hardly seems like an innovative alternative to incarceration and instead seems like a quick fix that ignores the goals of community safety, deterrence, and rehabilitation. One of the several problems with transferring inmates to Kern County is that Los Angeles County loses oversight of these inmates, exactly what the Board of Supervisors seeks to avoid, demonstrated by your statement that the County needs to "provide

a continuum of resources providing rehabilitative oversight during incarceration and after release.” Secondly, there is widespread agreement among researchers, practitioners, and other experts that being incarcerated closer to home better allows an inmate to reconnect to family and community, providing a greater opportunity for successful reentry upon release.

LARRP does not support the use of inter-county transfers, particularly when the County has not exhausted (or even inculcated) programs to safely reduce current jail populations. Moreover, it should be noted that at the present time, the jails in the County are not overcrowded. If there is a potential of overcrowding in the future, the best approach would be to use the strategies that have been set forth by experts, endorsed by your own motions, shown to be successful whenever employed, and encouraged by the law.

LARRP Supports Alternatives to Incarceration

As you know, to maximize community safety, deterrence, and rehabilitation, as well as to administer the most effective and cost-efficient criminal justice system, the use of incarceration must be balanced by use of other interventions when those would be more appropriate. Ample evidence has demonstrated—in jurisdictions within this state and in other jurisdictions around the country and indeed internationally—that alternatives to incarceration help reserve jail for the most dangerous offenders while better positioning other categories of offenders for successful reintegration into the community. These alternatives include pretrial release pursuant to validated risk assessment tools, supervision in the community (with or without monitoring), widespread use of rehabilitative programming designed to reduce recidivism and allow some inmates to transition to the community early, split sentences, and the like. LARRP supports the immediate expansion of these alternative efforts and programs in Los Angeles County. The opportunity exists for Los Angeles County to provide leadership and a replicable model for other counties, forestall jail overcrowding, and improve public safety outcomes.

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department has long been well aware of the need for alternatives to incarceration to deal with the possibility of jail overcrowding. In addition, the Sheriff’s Department publicly announced last year that it would only transfer inmates to other counties in extreme conditions. The report released in May 2012 by Dr. James Austin underscored that these alternatives would alleviate overcrowding in the County jail system. His report, “Evaluation of the Current and Future Los Angeles County Jail Population,” projected that the 21,000 2013 inmate population can be safely reduced by about 3,000 inmates by implementing the proposed LASD pretrial supervision and a reentry program for sentenced inmates using the innovative Education Based Incarceration programs.

Recent press statements by some members of the Sheriff’s office, however, have appeared to contemplate transfers of inmates, even before there is overcrowding, and without fully implementing the other, better, and less costly alternatives. This would be bad policy and departures from both the intentions of current law and past statements by the Sheriff’s Department itself.

Los Angeles County is fully capable of addressing the problem of jail overcrowding without the involvement of outside counties. For example, in Los Angeles County Jails, some 45% of inmates are awaiting trial and have not been convicted of any crime. Many of these pretrial detainees could be released safely with appropriate conditions, but due to generic bail schedules and a lack of proper tools to determine flight or safety risks, individuals who cannot afford to pay bail remain in custody even if they pose no threat. The Sheriff should look to enforce a better pretrial release program well before proposing drastic measures such as inter-county transfers.

LARRP respectfully requests that you decline to consider out-of-county transfers before using the array of effective, over-crowding reduction tools already at the County's disposal.

LARRP and the experts we count among our members stand ready to assist Los Angeles County in any way as you continue to implement realignment, improve our reentry processes, and assess alternatives to incarceration. LARRP is uniquely positioned to provide input from the community and to assist in developing policies and programs that balance the needs of that community, the fiscal requirements of the County, and the needs of our previously incarcerated men and women and those that serve them.

We will be calling each of the Board Justice Deputies to request an opportunity to discuss these and other reentry and realignment issues. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments (661/253-2273).

Best regards,



Peggy Edwards

Executive Director

On behalf of the LARRP Policy and Advocacy Committee

Cc:

Supervisor Gloria Molina

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Supervisor Don Knabe

Supervisor Michael Antonovich

Sheriff Lee Baca

Chief Executive Officer William T. Fujioka

Vicky Santana, District 1

Yolanda Vera, District 2

Vincent Harris, District 2

Joseph Charney, District 3

Carl Gallucci, District 4

Ana Pembedjian, District 5

Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership

Organizational Overview

Background

LARRP is a network of public and non-profit agencies and advocates working together to ensure that our reentry system meets the needs of our agencies, communities, and the people we serve, both in terms of capacity and public policy. **LARRP** is the successor organization to several other reentry groups including the Los Angeles Sheriffs Dept. Reentry Advisory Board and the 21st Century Reentry Project. The work of **LARRP** is accomplished through a Steering Committee and three standing committees: Service Delivery, Policy and Advocacy, and Regional Coalitions.

Mission

The Mission of **LARRP** is to build an effective public-private partnership and network within Los Angeles County to:

- Coordinate the implementation of evidence-based leading practices in reentry service delivery;
- Serve as a regional voice for community & faith-based organizations in policy and funding decisions;
- Advocate for administrative and legislative policy reforms;
- Provide support for the current and emerging regional/community reentry coalitions; and
- Serve as an information exchange between public and community partners

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is composed of experienced service providers, advocates, and public sector representatives. Members chair the standing committees and are developing an election/succession plan to ensure that this body represents the broader community. Members are:

Service Delivery Committee

Focuses on promising practices and capacity building for community-based and faith-based organizations; scope includes pre-release through post-release reentry service areas, as well as measurement and evaluation. Subcommittees include: Pre-Release Planning, Housing, Employment, Faith-Based Organizations, and Leading Practices.

Policy and Advocacy Committee

Develops and advocates for the implementation of legislative and administrative policies that reduce recidivism, improve public safety and social justice, safeguard the rights of victims, and decrease incarceration levels while providing accountability to taxpayers, protecting against costly liability, and reducing structural inequalities.

Regional Coalitions Committee

Seeks to coordinate the interests, priorities, and public policy priorities of regional coalitions throughout Los Angeles County to inform the work of LARRP; scope includes helping local communities develop coalitions where they do not exist and helping to strengthen existing group where capacity building assistance is needed.