

Resolution No:

Meeting Date: October 19, 2021

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
TO ADVANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, PROVIDE  
EQUITABLE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR ALL, AND INVEST IN ROOT  
CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND POVERTY**

Whereas, the County of San Diego strives to ensure our neighborhoods are safe places to live, work, and play for people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, abilities, economic statuses, and ages; and

Whereas, Black and Brown Americans are overrepresented in the incarcerated population; and

Whereas, inappropriate and ineffective incarceration of individuals who do not pose a public safety threat diverts resources away from other public services – such as services for substance abuse, mental health, or other behavioral health treatment – and generates significant costs for society, taxpayers, individuals, and families; and

Whereas, the neighborhood a person is raised in can determine a person's access to opportunities, exemplifying systemic inequities in accessing jobs, housing, education, and higher incomes; and

Whereas, zip codes play a critical role in life outcomes, particularly for Black and Brown children growing up in low-income zip codes where the lack of resources can determine how schools are supported, which jobs are offered to parents, and how zip codes connect to racial biases we see throughout American systems; and

Whereas, when caring for someone in crisis, such as an individual experiencing a mental health situation, law enforcement should be the last resort rather than the first step; and

Whereas, individuals who have experienced incarceration face increased stigma and are less likely to have access to the opportunities that provide economic stability, like employment, housing, and education; and

Whereas, these disparities reflect discriminatory policies that fuel systemic inequalities, burdening families for generations and perpetuating a cycle of poverty that in turn perpetuates the potential for incarceration; and

Whereas, there are multiple proposals at the federal and state levels led by advocates that have been at the forefront of reforming the criminal justice system for years, and communities across the country are working to safely reduce the number of people unjustly in jails and prisons through data-informed, evidence-based measures; and

Whereas, providing an equitable and accessible criminal justice system is a critical component of the County of San Diego's public safety services; and

Whereas, the County of San Diego is committed to reforming pretrial detention and bail practices – which currently results in low-income individuals often serving longer sentences due to a lack of funds – providing alternatives to incarceration; and

Whereas, the County of San Diego is committed to and has adopted an initiative to uplift boys and men of color; and

Whereas, the County of San Diego has been promoting best practices to ease reentry into communities and reduce recidivism, and is committed to keeping youth safe, engaged, and out of the justice system using data-driven methods; and

Whereas, the County of San Diego believes in providing treatment, rather than incarceration, as a first step to individuals struggling with substance abuse and mental illness, because appropriate treatment of these individuals will ultimately promote the wellness, self-sufficiency, and quality of life of all San Diego County individuals and families.

Now, therefore, be it resolved,

The County of San Diego – including its Public Safety Group, Health and Human Services Agency, and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice – is committed to working with its justice partners, community-based organizations, and justice-impacted individuals to advance criminal justice reform, protect public safety, provide equitable alternatives to incarceration for all, invest in the root causes of behavioral health and poverty, and move forward policies that seek criminal justice reform using a data-driven and evidence-based approach that is examined for internal racial bias; and

Be it further resolved, the County of San Diego commits to utilizing criminal justice reform practices that will seek to uplift diverse communities of color – including but not limited to disabled and LGBTQ2IA+ Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color – to create safe environments for all communities, and build trust between law enforcement, partners in the criminal justice system, and the communities they serve and protect.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY  
LONNIE ELDRIDGE, COUNTY COUNSEL

By: Mark Day, Senior Deputy County Counsel