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November 2, 2021,

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TO: The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

LARRP is writing this letter to support Supervisor Solis' Motion on the November second meeting with respect to a Comprehensive Review and Audit of the Inmate Welfare Fund. Motion 16 will ensure that a fair audit is completed and that the Board and County get access to information about how funds are spent and what the system will look like once the transition to free calls and at-cost commissary items have been integrated.

LARRP is the largest county-wide network of reentry-focused non-profit organizations, public agencies, and advocates that work 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. We represent diverse stakeholders across Los Angeles County, and we join with dozens of organizations serving and advocating for formerly and currently incarcerated people to support additional oversight being instituted for the Inmate Welfare Fund, as well as the eventual move to ensure that the carceral population is not being charged to assist in the upkeep of the carceral system itself.

Solis' Board motion makes mention of the Sheriff Department's reluctance to embrace oversight for the funding going toward facilities funding, adding from the Sheriff's audit that they "do not believe extending IWC authority to include oversight over IWF jail maintenance is appropriate". Civilian oversight plays a vital role in ensuring accountability and transparency in the law enforcement and carceral systems. We believe that the county, and the organizations that work in the reentry space should know how these funds are being spent, and we support the push for greater levels of oversight with these funds.

In addition, while we understand the underlying principles of funding programming and improvements with the Inmate Welfare Fund, the illness to provide maintenance and programmatic funding should not be a burden that falls upon the shoulders of the incarcerated population. In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Sheriff's department was provided 3.3 billion dollars in funding, with 862 million going to support the jail system. We recognize the push to defund will require cuts across the board from law enforcement infrastructure, but we can not allow cuts to affect the maintenance and programming of the facilities that house some of our county's most vulnerable populations.

We commend Supervisor Solis' push to bring accountability and transparency to the Inmate Welfare fund. We will continue to push for funding that does not come at the expense of the carceral population. As the Board has taken steps to look at the feasibility of at-cost commissary items and free phone calls, we must ensure that budget shortfalls do not lead to further maintenance shortcomings and programs being cut as a result. Providing oversight to the IWF and gather further information on the budgetary and appropriations process is vital to providing the community with the information we deserve.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at troyvaughn@lareentry.org, or LARRP's Policy Coordinator, Charles Vignola, at charles@lareentry.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Troy Vaughn', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Troy Vaughn
Co-Founder & Executive Director
Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP)