

8. Consider report on community outreach on establishing a juvenile camp program at Juvenile Hall, approve in concept an "Ordinance Adding Chapter 2.130 To The Santa Cruz County Code Establishing Redwoods Coastal Academy At Juvenile Hall", and take related actions ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Probation

Subject: Report on Community Outreach for Juvenile Camp Program

Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

Formal Title: Consider report on community outreach on establishing a juvenile camp program at Juvenile Hall, approve in concept an "Ordinance Adding Chapter 2.130 To The Santa Cruz County Code Establishing Redwoods Coastal Academy At Juvenile Hall", and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Accept and file report on community outreach and feedback regarding establishing a juvenile camp program at Juvenile Hall;
2. Approve in concept an "Ordinance Adding Chapter 2.130 To The Santa Cruz County Code Establishing Redwoods Coastal Academy At Juvenile Hall";
3. Schedule ordinance for a second reading and final adoption on March 11, 2025;
4. Direct the Clerk of the Board to publish the Notice of Proposed Ordinance Summaries in a newspaper of general circulation at least five days prior to the scheduled second reading and final adoption, pursuant to Government Code Section 25124; and
5. Authorize the Chief Probation Officer to sign documents necessary to implement a five-bed juvenile camp program.

Executive Summary

The development of a juvenile camp program in Santa Cruz County is a strategic initiative aimed at improving the outcomes for justice-involved youth while maximizing local resources and maintaining community ties. The Probation Department is returning to present information on community outreach efforts and community feedback as directed by the Board.

Discussion

Juvenile Justice Realignment

California Senate Bill (SB) 823 was signed into law on September 30, 2020, effectively eliminating Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) custodial facilities and transferring the responsibility of care, custody, and supervision from the State to local jurisdictions. In Santa Cruz County, the Probation Department opened a local Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) in December 2024, and there is currently one youth committed to the program.

Evidence gathered in support of Juvenile Justice Realignment demonstrated that justice system-involved youth are more successful when they remain connected to their

families and communities. Justice system-involved youth who remain in their communities have lower recidivism rates and are more prepared for their transition back into the community.

Without a juvenile camp program in Santa Cruz County, it has been necessary for Probation to contract with multiple counties to accept our youth when a juvenile camp placement is ordered by the Courts and for youth to step down or transition from a SYTF. Camp programs vary by location and may be operating within a juvenile hall or a separate facility and range from restrictive to non-restrictive environments. Current placement contracts have rates between \$140-\$522 per day/per youth. All determinations are made based on proximity, program offerings, availability, and acceptance of youth. The number of youth placed in a juvenile camp by the Courts varies by year. Over the past five years, there have been 18 camp placements with an average length of stay between 6-9 months, and 16 of 18 have been sent 183 miles away.

Local Juvenile Camp Program

To optimize local rehabilitation efforts, reduce reliance on external placements, and decrease General Fund appropriations, on October 8, 2024, the Probation Department asked the Board to approve utilizing the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall facility to provide programming and space for youth adjudicated to a juvenile camp as a Less Restrictive Program (LRP) or step-down program. At that time, the Board directed Probation to conduct outreach to gather community feedback and return to the Board for further discussion.

On October 31, 2024, the Probation Department convened a town hall meeting for community members and organizations to discuss establishing a juvenile camp program at the Juvenile Hall facility. Also on October 31, 2024, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council SB 823 Subcommittee was informed of the department's desire to develop a Camp program. Plans for a Camp program was also shared during the department's November 8, 2025, Youth Justice Convening which was attended by numerous County and community partners. An additional meeting with justice-involved youth and their families was scheduled for February 3, 2025. It was necessary to cancel the meeting due to community participation in advocacy events. In lieu of meeting in person, youth and families completed electronic surveys to inform our Camp and SYTF programming. The meeting with youth and families will be rescheduled and held before the end of this fiscal year.

Additionally, the Probation Chief has reviewed this request and the framework as well as purpose for creating a camp program locally with the Chair of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDP) and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council SB 823 Subcommittee members. Probation will also be providing additional information to the JJDP at the next regularly scheduled meeting on February 13, 2025.

Probation has returned to the Board today to present feedback from the community town hall, information sharing sessions, and surveys.

Juvenile Hall Operations

The Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall facility operates two independent units with the capacity to provide individual rooms with restroom facilities for up to 40 youth. All rooms meet Title 15 juvenile detention facility standards including use for Camp, LRP, and step-down programs.

Probation is proposing designating five beds for the purpose of juvenile camp commitments. Housing of youth is based on classification, risk level, individual needs, and safety of all youth within the facility. The classification system is an ongoing process throughout a commitment.

The juvenile camp program will also serve as a step-down for re-entry for young people who need that level of transition services and supervision from SYTF.

Youth in juvenile camp programming will participate in programs with other youth in the unit, promoting social development and peer learning. Probation is already working with community partners, such as the County Office of Education and Cabrillo College to develop educational, vocational, and life skills programming unique to the needs of youth receiving a lengthy commitment to be served within the Juvenile Hall.

Benefits of a Local Juvenile Camp

There are significant benefits to providing a juvenile camp program in Santa Cruz County, including:

- **Family Proximity:** Keeping youth closer to home will facilitate equitable access to family visits and support, fostering better rehabilitation and reentry outcomes.
- **Continuity of Care:** Youth ordered to Camp, as well as youth transitioning from SYTF when needed, may be served without having to physically change locations and programming and without upsetting daily activities or interrupting or changing programs and curriculum. This would also provide continuity of treatment by allowing youth to remain with their mental health provider(s) and natural supports.
- **Financial Efficiency:** Maximizing utilization of Juvenile Hall staff, facility, and programs will reduce the need for external placements and free up local resources for other essential County services.

The establishment of a juvenile camp program within Santa Cruz County is designed to enhance local rehabilitation efforts, reduce reliance on out-of-county placements, and optimize the use of county resources by significantly reducing the burden on the County General Fund.

While \$469,000 in County General Funds are currently encumbered for various out-of-county Camp placements to ensure availability when court-ordered, the cost for providing these services at Santa Cruz Juvenile Hall would be substantially less. Probation also anticipates a reduction in Juvenile Hall medical and mental health

treatment costs with the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative, allowing the Health Services Agency to direct bill Medi-Cal for some services.

Financial Impact

Establishing a juvenile camp program within Santa Cruz County is estimated to result in annual cost savings of approximately \$300,000 in County General Funds by reducing the need for contracting costs related to out-of-county placements (GL Key 577000, Object 74032). Due to the program's late implementation in FY 2024-25, cost savings for the initial year are estimated at approximately \$100,000. The County Administrative Office will realign Juvenile Hall appropriations as appropriate at mid-year.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Community Voices & Partnership
Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

Fernando Giraldo, Chief Probation Officer

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 2.130 TO THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CODE TO
ESTABLISH THE REDWOODS COASTAL ACADEMY AT JUVENILE HALL**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz hereby finds and declares the following:

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2020, SB 823 was signed into law, which eliminated the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and required the closure of all state juvenile custodial facilities no later than June 30, 2023, effectively transferring back the responsibility care, custody, and supervision of the highest risk juvenile justice youth to local jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, for several years, the Probation Department (Probation) has contracted with multiple counties to utilize the specialized rehabilitation services offered at their Ranch, Camp, and/or Secure Youth Treatment Facilities under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 880 et seq. and 1990 et seq., respectively; and

WHEREAS, Probation is now prepared to keep our juvenile justice youth closer to home in order to facilitate and strengthen critical family connections, foster and utilize local rehabilitation and reentry services to provide greater continuity of care, and provide a step-down placement level for youth transitioning from Secure Youth Treatment Facilities; and

WHEREAS, the current Juvenile Hall has two separate housing units with a total capacity of 40 youth and Probation wishes to designate up to 5 beds for a Camp program to be named the Redwoods Coastal Academy, with space for expansion when necessary and appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the Redwoods Coastal Academy will result in significant annual cost savings to the General Fund by reducing contracts for out-of-county placements and leveraging medical and mental health treatment costs through CalAIM and Medi-Cal for operations, staff, and services;

NOW THEREFORE the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz ordains as follows:

SECTION I

Chapter 2.130 is hereby added to the Santa Cruz County Code, to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 2.130
JUVENILE CAMP PROGRAM**

Sections:

- 2.130.010 Establishment—Juvenile Camp.**
- 2.130.020 Eligibility.**
- 2.130.030 Management and control.**

2.130.010 Establishment—Juvenile Camp.

Pursuant to the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 880 et seq., there is created and established a Juvenile Camp program for the County of Santa Cruz. The program shall be known as the “Redwoods Coastal Academy” (“RCA”) and located at the current Juvenile Hall site, unless changed by a resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

2.130.020 Eligibility.

Only wards under the Juvenile Court’s jurisdiction pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 602 shall be eligible for commitment to the Camp program. Wards under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court of another county may be committed to the Camp upon approval of the Chief Probation Officer pursuant to a written agreement.

2.130.030 Management and control.

The Probation Department shall oversee the management and control of the Juvenile Camp, under the direction of the Superintendent or Director of Juvenile Hall, as appointed by the Chief Probation Officer.

SECTION II

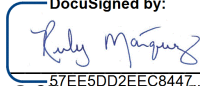
This Ordinance shall take effect on the 31st day after the date of final passage.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____ 2025, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS
NOES: SUPERVISORS
ABSTAIN: SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors

Attest: _____
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DocuSigned by:
 2/10/2025
57EE5DD2EEC8447
Office of the County Counsel

cc: Board of Supervisors
County Administrative Office
Probation Department

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: 0B5890E3-D8A7-4BBE-BEAD-42F6576E4205

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If you decide to receive notices and disclosures from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format. How you must inform us of your decision to receive future notices and disclosure in paper format and withdraw your consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically is described below.

Consequences of changing your mind

If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

All notices and disclosures will be sent to you electronically

Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through the DocuSign system all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

How to contact County of Santa Cruz:

You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:

To contact us by email send messages to: nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us

To advise County of Santa Cruz of your new email address

To let us know of a change in your email address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state: your previous email address, your new email address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address.

If you created a DocuSign account, you may update it with your new email address through your account preferences.

To request paper copies from County of Santa Cruz

To request delivery from us of paper copies of the notices and disclosures previously provided by us to you electronically, you must send us an email to nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state your email address, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We will bill you for any fees at that time, if any.

To withdraw your consent with County of Santa Cruz

To inform us that you no longer wish to receive future notices and disclosures in electronic format you may:

- i. decline to sign a document from within your signing session, and on the subsequent page, select the check-box indicating you wish to withdraw your consent, or you may;
- ii. send us an email to nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state your email, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.. The consequences of your withdrawing consent for online documents will be that transactions may take a longer time to process..

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To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please confirm that you have read this ERSD, and (i) that you are able to print on paper or electronically save this ERSD for your future reference and access; or (ii) that you are able to email this ERSD to an email address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format as described herein, then select the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

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- Until or unless you notify County of Santa Cruz as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by County of Santa Cruz during the course of your relationship with County of Santa Cruz.

**PUBLIC NOTICE
PROPOSED ORDINANCE
(SUMMARY)**

Board of Supervisors Information (for Clerk Use only):

Approved in Concept:

AMS Item:

Scheduled for Second Reading & Final Adoption: Click or tap to enter a date.

Ordinance Title:

**ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 2.130 TO THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CODE TO
ESTABLISH THE REDWOODS COASTAL ACADEMY AT JUVENILE HALL**

Ordinance Summary:

This ordinance will add Chapter 2.130 to the Santa Cruz County Code and allow the Probation Department to establish a Camp program at the current Juvenile Hall location. More specifically, this new program will be called the “Redwoods Coastal Academy” and designate up to 5 beds for local youth ordered by the Juvenile Court to a Camp commitment.

The full text of this ordinance is available for public review at the Office of the Clerk of the Board, Room 520, Governmental Center Building, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, California 95060; and on the Internet at:

<https://santacruzcountyca.iqm2.com>

For Clerk Use Only:

By: Click or tap here to enter text.

Dated: Click or tap to enter a date.

From: [Erin Wood](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#); [Justin Cummings](#)
Subject: agenda item #8, no to a "juvenile camp"
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 11:21:47 AM

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Dear Supervisors,

My name is Erin Wood and I'm a resident of Santa Cruz, a graduate of UCSC, and a licensed acupuncturist working with Medi-Cal patients in the county.

I'm writing to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department. From my understanding, the probation proposal appears to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy". This is deeply misleading, it is still juvenile detention. I am concerned that the "ranch camp" will lead to worse outcomes for youth in our county. Sending youth across the hall to a new cell where maybe the door opens more often is neither a real "step-down" in detention, nor is it appropriate for youth who have committed less serious offenses.

I believe that we should redirect any efforts and money to more fruitful support services and housing. What if we converted the whole facility to a non-locked community center that offers trauma-informed behavioral health for folks of all ages, perhaps housing for elders or veterans, a vocational resource center, a food pantry and dining room for communal meals, a garden, and whatever else the community wanted? We wouldn't have to invest in the surveillance and detention of our youth, friends, and neighbors. There is an open space, playing field, with volleyball court and basketball courts and wouldn't it be fabulous for more folks to be able to enjoy this place in the mountains? Stopping this vicious cycle of surveillance and incarceration could mean as a society, we could start investing in programs that actually heal our neighbors and youth and keep the entire community safe.

I also want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-

impacted youth. Eventually, we could transition to spending too much money on this outdated facility and leading to ways that lead to more productive and supportive futures for youth.

Thank you for considering my input,
Erin Wood
Westside Resident
UCSC Graduate, Licensed Acupuncturist

**Herbal Wellness Check-Ins Virtually
Monday & Wednesday Afternoons,
Fridays All Day @12704 Hwy 9, Boulder Creek,
in the heart of the Santa Cruz Mountains
Tuesdays All Day at Branciforte Plaza at
555 Soquel Avenue, Suite 260, [Center for Health](#)**

From: [Julia Gratton](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#); [Justin Cummings](#)
Subject: Agenda line #8: No on Ranch Camp
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 7:19:05 AM

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Dear Supervisors,

My name is Julia Gratton. I grew up here in Santa Cruz County and came back to be close to my family and to make my life here after graduating college. I am writing to urge you to vote no on establishing Redwoods Coastal Academy at Juvenile Hall.

There is no good reason for establishing a Ranch Camp in Santa Cruz County. Youth are better served at home and through community based programs, and research shows that being incarcerated for even small amounts of time and even in low-security settings is bad for kids and leads to higher rates of recidivism. I am concerned that designating part of Juvenile Hall as a Ranch Camp would lead to more youth being incarcerated in Santa Cruz County and for longer terms. And I simply don't see any good reason for a Ranch Camp, since any youth eligible to be stepped down to a Ranch Camp would also be eligible to be stepped down to an individual plan for a Less Restrictive Program than would allow them to be at home and in their community.

Santa Cruz County prides itself on having made major reductions in its juvenile hall population, becoming a model for other California counties. It's time to live up to that legacy by saying no to Redwoods Coastal Academy and investing instead in the local organizations working with youth in our communities.

Thank you for all your work, and please vote no on Redwoods Coastal Academy.

Sincerely,
Julia Gratton

From: [Jill Schetter-Susskind](#)
To: [Justin Cummings](#); [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Comment on agenda item #8 for feb 25 meeting
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 1:05:21 PM

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Dear Justin and Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for taking the time to consider the most caring and effective options for local youth rehabilitation and reentry programs. I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department.

I currently live and operate a home preschool in District 3. As a parent, teacher and sibling to two brothers who as teens were placed in juvenile detention/rehabilitation programs that resulted in continuing trauma, incarceration and problems for decades, I am asking that you focus on the Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) implementation to promote a more cost- and outcome-effective **"least restrictive program" (LRP) model**. Instead of continuing to use a carceral model – the proposed Redwood Coastal Academy "ranch camp" is not actually a camp but instead reclassifying certain cells at the current juvenile hall – I urge you to look at this as an opportunity where youth in our community can receive appropriate support as they transition back to their families, school and society and set them up for *long-term* success.

In addition, I would like to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-impacted youth.

Sincerely,

Jill Schettler-Susskind



Santa Cruz, CA 95060

From: [Debra Schneider](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: DO NOT approve the Probation Department's proposal for a "Ranch Camp" for youth in Santa Cruz County.
Date: Thursday, February 20, 2025 7:16:44 PM

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Dear Supervisors:

My name is Debra Schneider and I'm a resident of Santa Cruz in Supervisorial District 3. I am a retired educator who worked with middle and high school students for 30 years.

I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department. As I understand it, the proposed "ranch camp" for juveniles merely renames a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy." This is misleading; it is still juvenile detention.

From my decades of work experience with youth, I know that young people are better served by a less restrictive program that keeps them at home or in a home-like setting and engages them in community activities and organizations.

Research reported by the National Bureau of Economic Research shows that "juvenile incarceration results in large decreases in the likelihood of high school completion and large increases in the likelihood of adult incarceration." California Senate Bill 823 directs that young people should be in the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being "to reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions." I encourage Santa Cruz County Supervisors to contribute to that effort.

In addition, I want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-impacted youth that makes a real, substantive difference in circumstances and programming to support our youth.

Thank you for considering my input,
Debra Schneider

From: [Tamar Ragir](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Feb 25 Agenda item 8 comments on proposal from probation
Date: Saturday, February 22, 2025 10:51:38 AM

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Dear Supervisors:

My name is Tamar Ragir and I'm a resident of Santa Cruz. I am also a high school teacher at an alternative high school called Delta. I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department.

From my understanding, the probation proposal appears to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy". This is misleading; it is still juvenile detention. I am concerned that the "ranch camp" will lead to worse outcomes for youth in our county. Sending youth across the hall from SYTF to a new cell where maybe the door opens more often is neither a real "step-down" in detention, nor is it appropriate for youth who have committed less serious offenses. I have several students who were incarcerated at the juvenile hall in Felton. The experience of being incarcerated has been difficult to recover from. It makes a big difference if we can keep them at home or in a home like-setting.

This [research](#) referenced in a recent New York Times article indicates that even a short stay in detention decreases graduation rates and increases recidivism as adults. Young people will be better served by a less restrictive program that engages them in community activities and organizations while living at home if possible.

As you probably know, *CA Senate Bill 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment* calls for the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being to "reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions." I'd love to see us, as a county, develop a more creative, less restrictive solution that better meets the requirements of the law and will better serve our young people.

In addition, I want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I heard that the probation department requested input from system impacted families, but none of the impacted students I know or their families were contacted. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee. There are also many other community organizations focused on supporting youth like Barrios Unidos. All of these

committees and organizations and impacted youth and their families should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan.

Thank you for considering my input,
Tamar Ragir

From: [Matt Nathanson](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Item #8 on February 25 Agenda - Ordinance Establishing "Redwoods Coastal Academy"
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 5:33:02 PM

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Dear Chairperson Hernandez and Board Members, Cummings, Martinez, De Serpa and Koenig:


I write to you as a Santa Cruz County resident in opposition to the proposal to create the euphemistically named "Redwoods Coastal Academy" in Juvenile Hall. The good idea in this proposal is to avoid sending youth from our county away to other counties to be incarcerated. The bad idea is to incarcerate these youth in the first place. You can call it an "Academy", but it is still Juvenile Hall. Much better to spend the financial and staff resources on alternate programming for youth who get arrested (mentoring programs, mental health and substance use treatment programs, academic and vocational education programs etc.).

I must confess I was surprised by the contents of the agenda packet itself for this item. While the agenda describes item #8 a "*report on community outreach on establishing a juvenile camp program at Juvenile Hall*", I don't see much information on what was learned from talking to members of the community. I do know that there are significant voices in our community who are opposed to this approach and I urge you to listen to MILPA, SURJ, and other organizations. There is solid, evidence based research that shows how even brief periods of incarceration for youth have enormous negative effects going forward, increasing the likelihood of re-incarceration in the future, decreasing the likelihood of high school completion, etc.)

Please do not move forward with this proposal but focus on other options that don't involve looking these youth up in Juvenile Hall, by whatever name you call it.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Nathanson, Public Health Nurse

 Santa Cruz CA 95060

From: Clare Bathum
To: [Board Of Supervisors; Fifth District](#)
Subject: Proposed Juvenile Camp Program
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:14:49 AM

****CAUTION: This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors,

My name is Clare Bathum and I'm a resident of Brookdale.

I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department.

From my understanding, the probation proposal appears to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy". This is misleading; it is still juvenile detention. I am concerned that the "ranch camp" will lead to worse outcomes for youth in our county. Sending youth across the hall to a new cell where maybe the door opens more often is neither a real "step-down" in detention, nor is it appropriate for youth who have committed less serious offenses.

Research <<https://www.nber.org/papers/w19102>> indicates that even a short stay in detention decreases graduation rates and increases recidivism as adults. Young people will be better served by a less restrictive program that keeps them at home or in a home-like setting and engages them in community activities and organizations.

In fact, CA Senate Bill 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment calls for the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being to "reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions."

In addition, I want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-impacted youth.

Thank you for considering my input,

Clare Bathum

From: [Luisa Magarian](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system
Date: Friday, February 21, 2025 9:27:43 AM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Supervisor Cummings,

I'm a resident of Santa Cruz, an auntie of two young kids at Bayview, and a graduate of Santa Cruz high school in the 90s. I've worked managing youth programs in the past.

I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department. I believe we can do better for the youth and for our community, and that doing so is imperative.

From my understanding, the probation proposal appears to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy". This is misleading; it is still juvenile detention. I am concerned that the "ranch camp" will lead to worse outcomes for youth in our county. Sending youth across the hall to a new cell where maybe the door opens more often is neither a real "step-down" in detention, nor is it appropriate for youth who have committed less serious offenses.

[Research](#) indicates that even a short stay in detention decreases graduation rates and increases recidivism as adults. Young people will be better served by a less restrictive program that keeps them at home or in a home-like setting and engages them in community activities and organizations.

In fact, *CA Senate Bill 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment* calls for the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being to "reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions."

In addition, I want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any “step down” program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-impacted youth.

Thank you for your consideration,

Luisa

From: [Leslie Potenzo](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Vote NO on CAMP Designation-Yes to Community Based LRP-Leading to Better Outcomes
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:49:53 AM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors,

My name is Leslie Potenzo and I live in Soquel. I have lived in Santa Cruz County for 35 years and I am a small business owner. I have long been working with numerous local organizations on the issues of Social and Racial Justice and Criminal Justice oversight.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO** on the Probation Department proposal to designate the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall as a CAMP facility. (Agenda Item 8)

Your decision with this vote presents a significant opportunity for Santa Cruz County and the Probation Department to be leaders in the Juvenile Justice System by committing to further implement the goals and directions of *SB 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment* which calls for the “least restrictive appropriate environment” with the goal being to “reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing **community-based responses and interventions.**”

An intent of SB823 is to use state funding previously used for confinement and incarceration to instead promote a **more cost effective Least Restrictive Program** (LRP) where youth can receive appropriate support in a non-carceral setting such as at-home rehabilitative programs with wrap around services, as they transition back to their families, school and society.

Community based less restrictive programs (LRPs) can take various forms: Among others, Individual At home Rehabilitation Plans or Community Residential Programs, both with community based organizations’ wrap around programs/services.

Additionally, I believe we are underutilizing the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) and the SB 823 Subcommittee. Both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process of developing a Less Restrictive Program (LRP) plan for our youth. Additionally, I urge you to expand the membership of these committees to include additional community members and individuals with lived experience in the justice system. This is a step in furthering equity, one of the Board’s core values. These committees can also play a role in the development of a comprehensive plan for the more vulnerable youth of Santa Cruz County. Let’s put our

collective care and wisdom towards real support and prevention strategies.

Let's stop doing "business as usual." You, the Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County have an opportunity to create and reimagine youth justice for the future. By centering care, accountability, and equity, you can create a system that genuinely supports the growth and potential of every young person.

Thank you for your consideration,

Leslie Potenzo

District 1

From: [pamela sexton](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Reject "camp"; Insist on least restrictive programming for youth
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 4:27:03 PM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing to you as a parent, a teacher, and an engaged community member. My own children are young adults, one at Cabrillo and the other at UCSC. I teach English as a Second Language to young adults in Watsonville and facilitate court-mandated positive discipline classes for parents involved with the Probation Department. As part of the local chapter of SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice), I study and take action with others to build together the world we need and deserve.

What happens to young people in Santa Cruz County matters to and impacts all of us.

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposal to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall "Coastal Redwood Academy" and to instead insist on "least restrictive programs" including release to home with wrap-around support programs through a broad community collaborative. Our youth need support and practice being in community, not the isolation and punishment that being housed at Juvenile Hall is.

Even a short stay in youth detention decreases graduation rates and increases recidivism later in life. Young people are better served by the least restrictive program, allowing them to be at home or in a home-like setting, engaged with and in community, exploring ways to find both belonging and purpose through local activities and organizations. In fact, it is a legislative mandate: *CA Senate Bill 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment* calls for transitioning youth to the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being to "reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions."

Vincent Schiraldi has extensive experience in juvenile justice research and policy, and if you haven't read his book *Mass Supervision: Probation, Parole, and the Illusion of Safety and Freedom*, I highly recommend you do. The book, alongside stories from people who have experienced probation - either through the juvenile justice system or as adults - has raised many questions about the real effectiveness of the Probation Department. Given current budget challenges, and the massive cost of housing

someone at Juvenile Hall, it is more important than ever to ensure that any money going toward juvenile justice is used in ways that are truly effective, both in the short term and long term.

I want to suggest an audit of the Probation Department to answer questions such as:

- * What are the existing racial disparities in youth sentencing and supervision practices?*
- * How does the use of risk assessment tools influence conditions of their supervision?*
- * Are probation officers adequately trained to address the complex needs of youth under supervision?*
- * What data exists to demonstrate the effectiveness of probation in reducing recidivism rates?*
- * Are probation conditions tailored to the specific needs of each individual offender, or are they often overly restrictive?*
- * How can probation be better integrated with community-based support services to promote successful reintegration?*

I also suggest there be a comprehensive and transparent analysis of what community based resources for youth currently exist in the county, and possibilities for creative alternative programs for youth. Related to this point, I urge you to expand the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and the SB823 Sub-Committee to include more community and system-impacted people, as these are important spaces where various groups can come together to build effective alternatives for youth.

In closing I want to say that I attended the October 31st (Halloween) community meeting called by the Probation Dept in response to the BOS push for more community engagement. It was exciting to see many different groups coming together with concern and an interest to collaborate to better serve our youth. That is something to build on, but the Probation Department's lack of transparency about current programs, plans and funding did nothing to build that important foundation.

Thank you for giving care and consideration to this important issue.

Sincerely,
Pamela Sexton



--

When we dream alone, it is only a dream, but when we dream together, it is the beginning of reality.

From: [Susan Kohen](#)
To: [Justin Cummings](#); [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Urgent: Protect Youth Justice—Vote NO on CAMP Designation
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 4:51:33 PM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisor Cummings and all Board Members,

I am emailing you to urge you to vote NO on the Juvenile Hall Camp Ordinance to Designate the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall as a CAMP facility.

I have been a resident of Santa Cruz County for over 20 years and am a former public school teacher, and have been studying the impacts of youth and adult incarceration for years.

Not only does incarceration not lead to rehabilitation, nor keep our communities safer (see [New York Times article from January 28, 2025](#) and some points from it below), the probation department has failed to include and engage the community in creating a less restrictive program (LRP) alternative but rather continued to move through this process with a business-as-usual attitude. The situation demands immediate and bold action to ensure our young people's safety, dignity, and future in Santa Cruz County. Because of this, we strongly encourage the Board of Supervisors to:

1.
Vote No On CAMP Designation:
2.
Expand the Number of Community Seats on the JJCC and SB 823 Sub-Committee
3.
Conduct an Extensive Analysis of Local Youth Resources
4.
Conduct an Audit of the Probation Department

Everything I have learned over the years points to the reality that incarceration is not the answer when harm has been caused, and actually leads to more problems. Here are some points from the NYT article mentioned above:

-

Research showed that **even brief juvenile incarceration** increased high school dropout rates and adult incarceration.

- Judges often believed that short-term detention could "teach lessons," but **data suggests it made youth more likely to reoffend.**
- Juvenile prisons often have pleasant names like "youth center" or "camp", but they are still prisons. In this case, the "camp" environment is no different than the SYTF.

Also, I would like to talk about the lack of transparency and cooperation by the probation department.

- While the community, including the related Santa Cruz County juvenile justice commissions and committees, were aware of the planned SYTF, the "Ranch Camp" proposal was bundled in with no warning at the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 8, 2024.
- The subsequent attempts to involve the community have been either hastily, inconveniently and poorly executed (the Watsonville meeting on October 31, 2024), or not publicized at all.

We believe that Santa Cruz County has an opportunity to create and reimagine youth justice for the future. By centering care, accountability, and equity, you can create a system that genuinely supports the growth and potential of every young person.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I trust that you will make a decision that truly demonstrates your care for all of the youth who live in our county.

Sincerely,
Susan Kohen
District 3

--

Susan Kohen
she/her/hers



"When we are taught that safety lies always with sameness, then difference, of any kind, will appear as a threat. When we choose to love we choose to move against fear - against alienation and separation. The choice to love is a choice to connect - to find ourselves in the other. " bell hooks- all about love

From: [regan brashear](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Vote No on Ranch Camp
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:56:08 PM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors:

My name is Regan Brashear and I'm a resident of Santa Cruz on the west side. I've lived in the county for 12 years and volunteer with an organization called SURJ (Showing up for Racial Justice) Santa Cruz County.

I'm writing to you today to ask you to stop any consideration of the "ranch camp" proposed by the county probation department.

From my understanding, the probation proposal appears to rename a few cells in the Juvenile Hall to "Coastal Redwood Academy". This is misleading; it is still juvenile detention. I am very concerned that the "ranch camp" will lead to worse outcomes for youth in our county. Sending youth across the hall to a new cell where maybe the door opens more often is neither a real "step-down" in detention, nor is it appropriate for youth who have committed less serious offenses.

[Research](#) indicates that even a short stay in detention decreases graduation rates and increases recidivism as adults. Young people will be better served by a less restrictive program that keeps them at home or in a home-like setting and engages them in community activities and organizations.

In fact, *CA Senate Bill 823 - Dept. of Juvenile Justice Realignment* calls for the "least restrictive appropriate environment" with the goal being to "reduce and then eliminate racial and economic disparities, and reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions."

In addition, I want to see the probation department engage more deeply with the community in creating any "step down" program for youth. I understand that we have the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and a related 823 subcommittee; both of these community oversight committees should be engaged more deeply in the process for developing a plan for our system-impacted youth.

Thank you for considering my input,
Regan

--

Regan Brashear

[Somatics Coach](#) / [Filmmaker](#) / [Impact Producer](#)



Schedule a free discovery call for somatic coaching [here](#).

This email was sent from Santa Cruz, CA. Santa Cruz is located on the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. The [Amah Mutsun Tribal Band](#) comprised of the descendants of Indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands and heal from historical trauma. You can learn more and support their work [here](#).



Proposal for Developing a Camp Program in Santa Cruz

**SERVING OUR YOUTH
LOCALLY TO IMPROVE
OUTCOMES**

FEBRUARY 2025

2025:
1 youth ordered into
Camp Placement:
Camp Singer



2019-2024 Camp Placement Data

Total Sent: 18

Avg Sent Per Year: 3-4

Placement Locations:

16 Camp Singer - Yuba County

1 Coastal Valley Academy - San Luis Obispo County

1 William James Ranch - Santa Clara County

Rationale for Developing a Local Camp Program



**PROXIMITY TO FAMILY
IMPROVES
REHABILITATION
OUTCOMES**



**LOCAL EXPANSION OF
CONTINUUM OF CARE
STEP-DOWN AND
TRANSITIONAL
SUPPORT FOR SYTF**



**MINIMIZE OUT-OF-
COUNTY PLACEMENT
COSTS AND
LEVERAGING
EXISTING STAFF AND
FACILITIES**



**FOSTER SUCCESSFUL
REENTRY AND
EQUITABLE
OPPORTUNITIES**

Timeline Review

OCTOBER 8, 2024

Board of Supervisors Meeting

- Probation Department directed to hold town hall meetings

OCTOBER 31, 2024

Community Town Hall

Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council SB823 Sub Committee

NOVEMBER 8, 2024

Youth Justice Convening: Transformations in Juvenile Justice: *Reflecting on the Past and Shaping the Future*

FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Chief met with Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission Chair

Community Town Hall Rescheduled

- *Youth & Family survey participation*

Probation Town Hall – Oct. 31, 2024



*Together, we are not just
imagining a better future—
we are building it.*



Youth Justice Convening – Nov. 8, 2024



Community Town Hall Report

Community
Engagement &
Planning

Services for
Youth &
Families

Facility &
Program
Development

Training &
Collaboration

Funding &
Resources

Holistic &
Restorative
Focus

Community
Input &
Oversight

Advocacy &
Accountability

*"Office of Youth and Community
Restoration Technical Assistance"
resource provided to community*

Community Town Hall Summary

Program accessibility:

- bilingual translators, family involvement, cultural relevancy

Wraparound services:

- mentorship, therapy, vocational training

Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs) close to communities:

- emphasize home placement

Expanded opportunities; partner with employment unions, colleges, CBOs:

- education and vocational/employment training

Sustainable reentry strategies:

- education and employment pathways; restorative justice framework

Community Forum Report – Nov. 20, 2025

Invest in
Community
Resources

Reform the
System

Expand
Community Based
Alternatives

Prioritize
Prevention

Empower Youth
Voice

Community Forum Themes

Insufficient Accessible Resources and Opportunities:

- poverty, housing insecurity, accessible healthcare, positive engagement

Systemic Issues:

- police maltreatment, racial profiling, lack of transparency in the juvenile justice system, overuse of incarceration, systemic reforms needed

Desire for Community-Based Solutions:

- community outreach, impactful diversion programs, access to restorative justice interventions, more culturally relevant programs

Importance of Prevention:

- focus on early intervention prevention programs, youth development opportunities, addressing root cause of youth crime

Need for Youth Voice and Engagement:

- listening to youth, engage in decision making, creating listening spaces

Financial Impact Overview



- Current out-of-county
Camp Program appropriations:
\$469,000
- Estimated annual cost savings:
\$300,000 in County General Funds
- Serving our youth locally reduces costs and maximizes the use of existing resources and staff while improving youth outcomes

Detailed Cost Breakdown

CURRENT OUT-OF-COUNTY CAMP PROGRAM PLACEMENTS:

Yuba County:

Per Youth \$150/day | \$54,000/year

Santa Clara County:

Per Youth \$522/day | \$190,530/year

ANNUAL ESTIMATED
OUT-OF-COUNTY
PLACEMENT COST:

~ \$469,000

3-4 YOUTH PER YEAR

LOCAL CAMP PROGRAM ESTIMATED COST: SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER

Out of Home Continuum

STRTP

Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program

- Program completion: when therapeutic goals are met
- Foster care order - goal to return to community
- Extended Foster Care for youth 18 and older

Camp Program

Secure Facility Camp Program

- Program completion: 6-9 months
- Home visits- furloughs may be offered towards program end

Juvenile Hall

Juvenile Hall Commitment

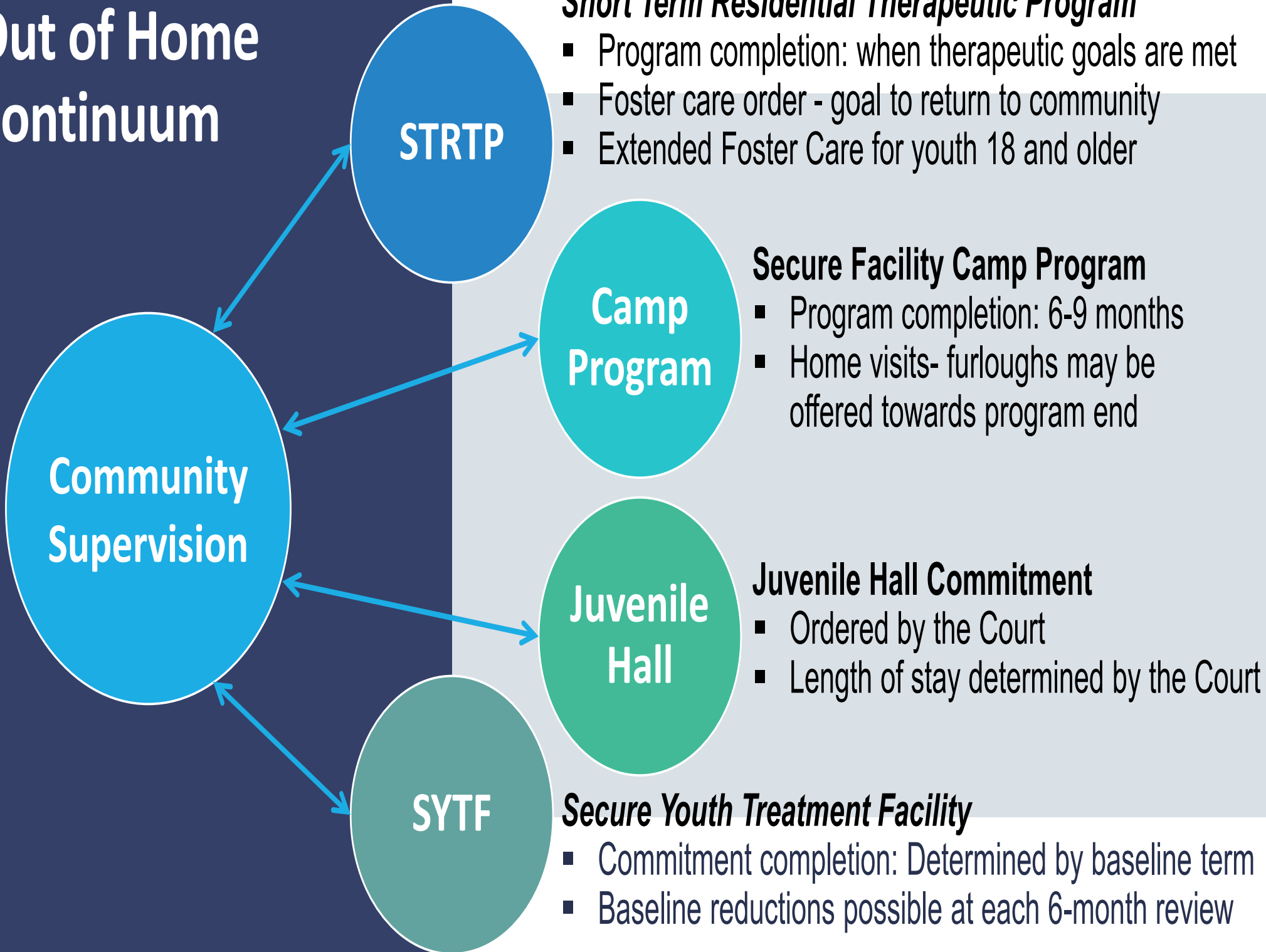
- Ordered by the Court
- Length of stay determined by the Court

SYTF

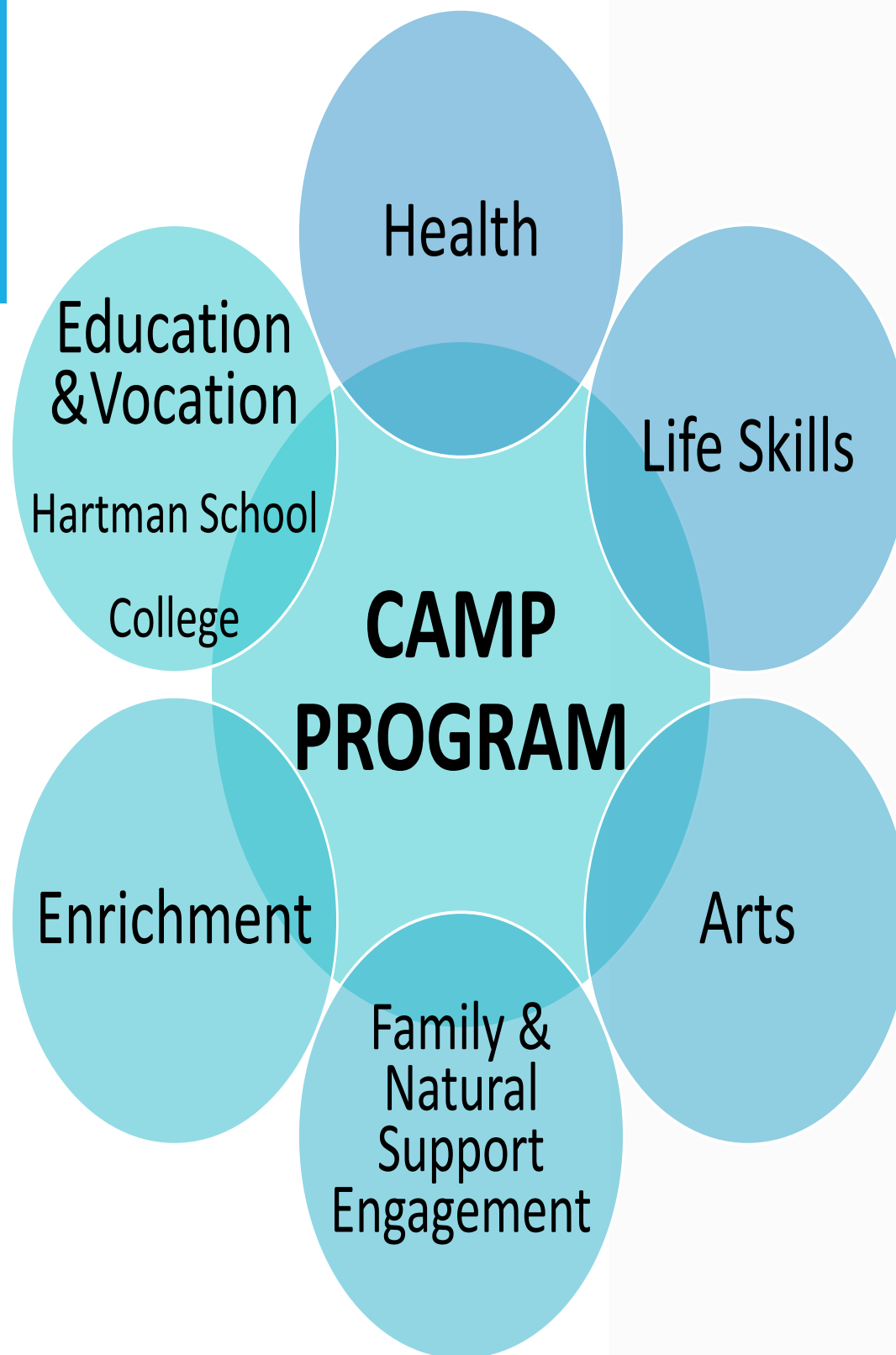
Secure Youth Treatment Facility

- Commitment completion: Determined by baseline term
- Baseline reductions possible at each 6-month review

Community Supervision



Program and Services

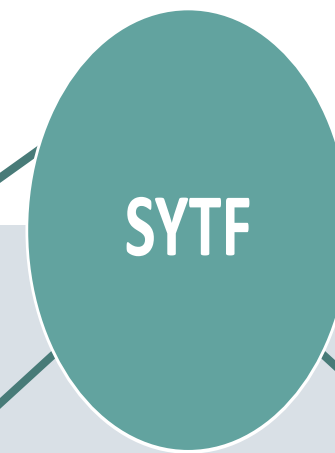


CAMP As A Reentry Pathway

Less Restrictive Placement Services (LRP)



- Furlough possibility
- In class learning, off-site and on-campus
- Employment / ID



- SLE (Sober Living Environment)
- Program Housing
- ATD (Alternatives to Detention)
- Prosocial



- Youth 18-25
- Vocational education
- Cal-Fire employment opportunities

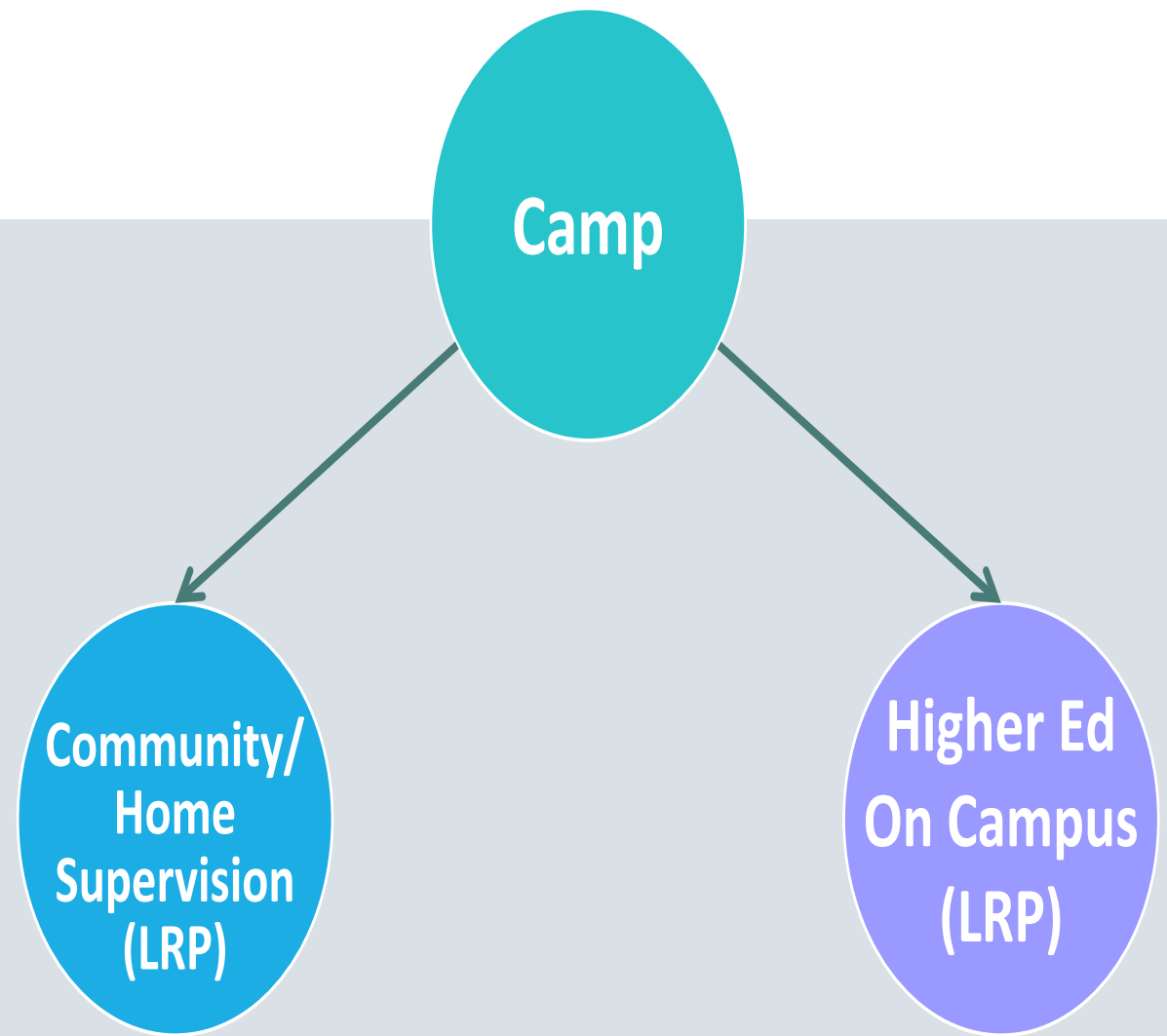


- Includes supportive services
- Community College or University

Step Down from Camp Program

LRP AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

- STAR program reentry support
- Sober Living Environment (SLE)
- Prosocial activities
- Alternatives To Detention (ATD)
- Individualized treatment / services
- Employment services
- Cultural engagement
- Life skills

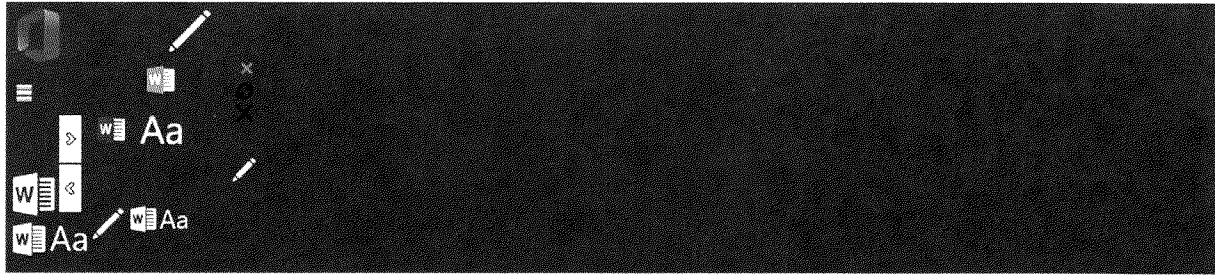


Recommended Actions

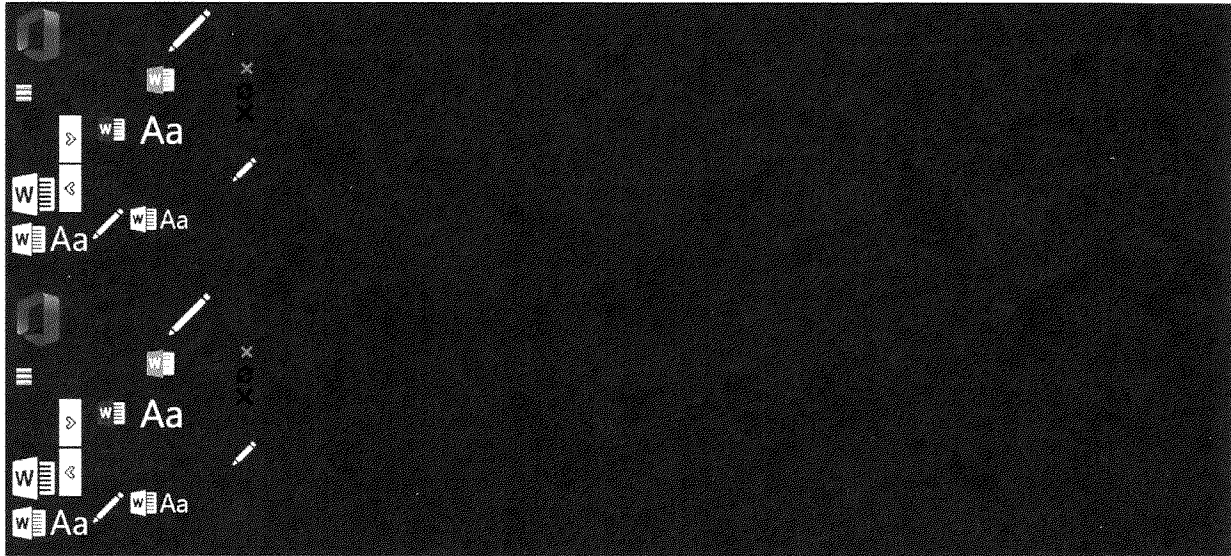
1	2	3	4	5
Accept and file report on community outreach and feedback regarding establishment of a Camp Program at Juvenile Hall	Approve in concept the ordinance for Redwoods Coastal Academy Camp Program	Direct the Clerk to place the ordinance on March 11, 2025, agenda for final adoption	Direct the Clerk to publish the Notice of Proposed Ordinance in accordance with the government code section.	Approve the Chief of Probation to sign necessary paperwork to implement the Camp Program

Thank you

QUESTIONS?



Youth staements 2024 against PO's..docx



1 / 1

When I was on probation as a youth, my PO was very hard to get a hold of, never seemed to be in whenever I needed his support. However, whenever He wanted to reach me, he would threaten to put me in custody if I didn't come into the Probation office whenever he wanted to see me. He didn't care that I was at school or at work and could have lost my job or that I didn't have a way to get there. I was just supposed to drop everything and prayed he didn't arrest me. This PO still works there, and I am afraid of retaliation from him if he knew my name that's why I am not giving my name even though I have another PO today.

When I was on probation, the Gang Task Force invaded my house and went through everything, they scared my Mom and my little sister, but they didn't care. Even though they didn't find anything, I told them I didn't have anything, and I was doing everything I'm supposed to. I remember one Officer saying to me" **I will be watching you and make sure you end up in prison with all your homies**" I was 17 yrs old, going to school and had a job after school to help my family. Probation never looked at the fact that yes, I made a mistake, but I never hurt anyone and that I was really trying to stay

out of trouble and working to help my family. **I am older now and no longer on Probation but I have No Trust in the Probation department because I have experienced how they abuse their power and lie about saying they just want to help but in reality they are just waiting for you to make a small mistake to lock you back up.** Probation is all about locking up young people, *especially from Watsonville* to make themselves look good and make money off us. Now that I am older, I can see their TRUE COLORS. Today, I am in college because of the REAL people who supported and believed in me from Barrios Unidos and Rising Scholars. **To that Officer who hoped to put me in prison I want him to know that “Someday I will be a lawyer (will take the BAR exam soon) to protect the young people of my community against the injustice, so in a way I guess I should Thank that Officer, nah, I will see him in court someday”.**

Respectfully,

Aka A.F.

I refuse to give my real name because I have worked hard to get where I am and will not lose all that I have accomplished but trust me everything I stated is true and I am sorry I could not be there in person, like I said I'm in Law School.