

CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN IN CUSTODY AT SF JAIL



Community Presentation BOS Meeting March 12, 2026

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CONTEXT AND PURPOSE



Over 30 human rights organizations have come together calling for urgent action to center dignity, safety, and human rights for women and trans people in San Francisco County jail.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATION ROADMAP

- 1) What jail conditions are like for women in SF Jail and the impact these jail conditions have on women
- 2) Our community recommendations to ensure dignity for women



HOW 'ROUTINE' STRIP SEARCHES TRAUMATIZE PEOPLE IN U.S. JAILS AND PRISONS

Re-traumatization for
Survivors of Violence

Psychological and
Physical Stress
Responses

Barriers to
Healing, Trust, and
Public Safety



continued loss of
body autonomy

Humiliation and
Public Exposure

Power and Control
Dynamics

ACCESS TO SUNLIGHT AND THE OUTDOORS

- Women and Trans folks do not have access to sunlight or outdoor space.”
- Title 15 code violations (e.g., access to fresh air, lighting, space)



The only time we get any fresh air or sunlight is when we are taken to the hospital.

We're not even able to open a window, so we're breathing recycled, dusty air through vents that are moldy and dirty.

ACCESS TO HEALTH, SAFETY AND MEDICAL NEEDS

- Medical needs being met (medication, urgent care)
- Psych holds, frequency and time spent in safety cell
- Dietary needs being met

It is a **big problem** to ask us to **talk to the jail therapists**. They are mostly male and **we don't trust them** because there have been times in the past **they reported back what we said** to the deputies.

If you're known to be raising concerns in the jail, your requests for psych appointments will be **delayed or ignored as retaliation**.

FACILITY ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION

Access to Clean facility (sanitation,
mold, pests)

Clean clothes and bedding

Overcrowding

Lockdowns



Overcrowding has made conditions in here much worse. **I've been here for years waiting for trial** and this is the worst it's been. There isn't even a separate intake unit where **people coming from the street who are sick and detoxing** can be put separately. **Everyone is put all together** which is different from how it used to be. This **leads to more sickness** coming into the jail and being spread. And on top of everything right now there is a **big roach problem** which isn't being addressed.



CONDUCT & PROCEDURES

- Strip searches (frequency and dignity)
- Use of force/restraints
- Complaints process
- PREA Violations
- Release Procedures

I was released at 12 am in the middle of the night, with no transportation and no services, except that I needed to report to ACM right away in the morning.

I have **been sexually assaulted by deputies several times** since being at the jail.

When **I reported it** through PREA, **one of my abusers**—a senior deputy who the jail relied on for overtime shifts—**was allowed to continue working with women.**

MEDICAL IMPACT OF ABRUPT DISCONTINUATION OF GENDER AFFIRMING CARE

- **Trigger rapid hot flashes and night sweats**
- **Loss of bone density**
- **Neurological: Brain fog, memory, concentration, mood swings**

MENTAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

- Triggers trauma for survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- PTSD, panic attacks, and long-term mental health harm
- Loss of dignity and bodily autonomy
- Barriers to trust, healing, and stability



If you move out of that area for any reason, a **flashlight is in your face** and you're **being yelled at** to get back to your bunk. As a result, we're **standing in our bunk areas for 8 hours a day with little to nothing to do.**

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

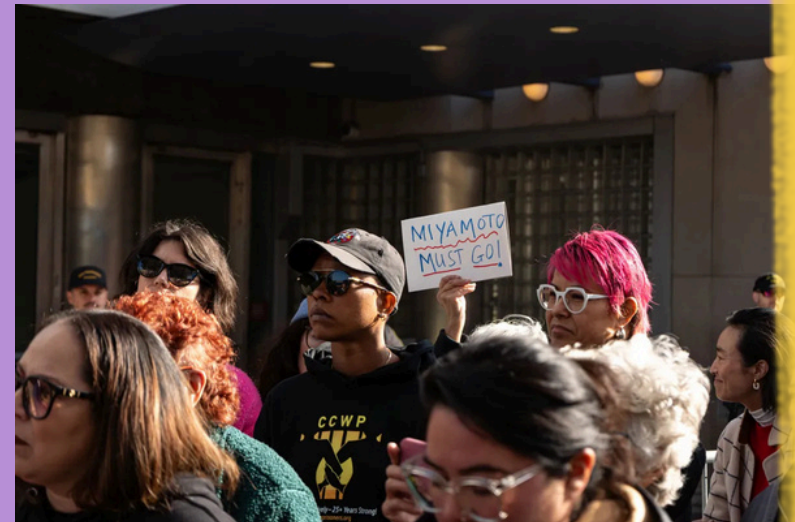


- **Trauma increases instability and recidivism**
- **Harms reentry and family stability**
- **Undermines trust in public institutions**
- **Community-based care improves outcomes**

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE DIGNITY FOR WOMEN

In the Jail:

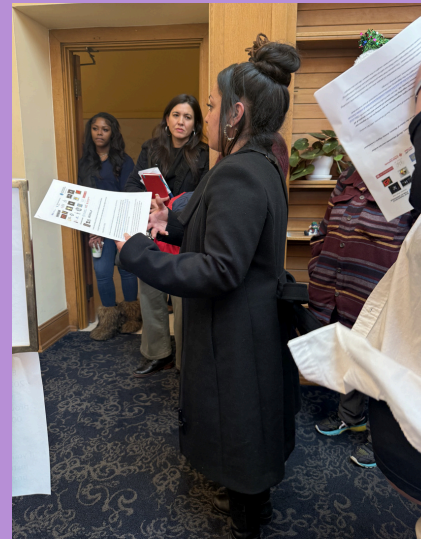
- Allow for women to access sunlight
- Restrict strip searches to individualized reasonable suspicion
- Protect and secure body camera footage
- Ensure accountability and transparency



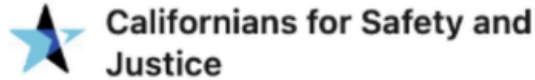
COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE DIGNITY FOR WOMEN

For the Board of Supervisors:

- Fully fund the Sheriff's Oversight Board
- Hire an independent Inspector General
- Prioritize non-jail alternatives in policy and budgeting, so women are not further traumatized



Thank you!



Greater than one.

