

From: [Mchugh, Eileen \(BOS\)](#)
To: [BOS Legislation, \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: FW: Support Public Defender Pilot Program Resolution from a Former Lifer
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 11:04:02 AM

From: Liebb, Stephen (PDR) <stephen.liebb@sfgov.org>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 12:43 PM
To: BOS-Supervisors <bos-supervisors@sfgov.org>
Cc: BOS-Legislative Aides <bos-legislative_aides@sfgov.org>
Subject: Support Public Defender Pilot Program Resolution from a Former Lifer

Dear San Francisco Supervisors,

I served 32 years in the California Prison System and am blessed to be free and working for the San Francisco Public Defender's Freedom Project. The outreach and work of the Freedom Project has enabled prisoners to be restored to their families and communities with comprehensive re-entry support.

I have witnessed the impact of the Public Defender Pilot Program in providing resources and support for our work. The Freedom Project has given hope and freedom to those who have been incarcerated for decades and safely return them to their communities.

I don't think you can measure hope and freedom with just numbers. The Freedom Project helps redress wrongs in the prosecution and sentencing of those case off by society and provide them with a new beginning,

Please support this resolution. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Peace,

Stephen Liebb



From: [Hosman, Elliot \(PDR\)](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Please Support Public Defender Pilot Program Resolution
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 8:14:32 AM

Dear San Francisco Supervisors,

My name is Elliot Hosman and I work as a Criminal Justice Specialist II in the Freedom Project of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. The Freedom Project advocates to ensure people who are rehabilitated but still serving long prison sentences can get back to court for a second look, based on their current circumstances, and to ensure all services needed for successful reentry are available. We are extremely proud to boast a ZERO recidivism rate since being properly staffed, with a holistic team of attorneys, social workers, and paralegal staff.

The Governor's proposed budget cuts \$40 million to the Public Defender Pilot Program (PDPP) in 2023-24, which is the third and final year of the pilot program. We are grateful to this Board for considering the resolution introduced by Supervisor Chan on February 27, 2024, urging the Governor and Legislature to eliminate this proposed cut, which negatively impacts both the Public Defender's Office and the SF Bar Association. **Will you vote AYE on this resolution, and if possible co-sponsor?**

Over the last five years, several state laws have recognized the need to reevaluate prison sentences after the passage of time and strenuous rehabilitation efforts. These laws allow judges to determine whether additional incarceration is now counterproductive given a person's demonstrated redemption and the significant contributions they could make to their families and communities if allowed to re-enter society.

The Freedom Project has done amazing work with these funds, and is ready to do more.

- The Freedom Project has helped reunite 84 individuals with their communities since we began in 2020—46 of whom were serving life sentences.
- Incarcerating elders and other people who are ready to return home is expensive. From July 2020 - July 2023, we've saved the state of California \$136.5 million.
- Not only do we help people come home, we connect them with vital health services, and housing. For example, 100% of our clients have stable housing when released.

This work is important in meeting the needs of San Franciscans. Though our city's Black population is just 5%, 55% of those in prison from San Francisco are Black. Elder and

youth offenders suffer disproportionately. Despite very low recidivism rates for elders, 47% of the people in prison on San Francisco cases are over 50, 28% are over 60, and 8% are 70 or older. And despite research showing nearly all young people “age out” of offending, youth offenders account for 31% of imprisoned San Franciscans.

Please support this resolution. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Elliot Hosman (they/them)
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From: [Harris, Danielle \(PDR\)](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Please Support Public Defender Pilot Program Resolution
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 2:30:21 PM

Dear San Francisco Supervisors,

I am the Managing Attorney for The Freedom Project of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. The Freedom Project advocates to ensure people who are rehabilitated but still serving long prison sentences can go back to court for a second look, based on their current circumstances, and to ensure all services needed for successful reentry are available. We are extremely proud to boast a zero-recidivism rate since being properly staffed with a holistic team of attorneys, social workers, and paralegal staff.

Over the last five years, several state laws have recognized the need to reevaluate prison sentences after the passage of time and strenuous rehabilitation efforts. Second-look resentencing asks: Does a sentence continue to serve public safety? Or, instead, is additional incarceration now counterproductive given demonstrated redemption combined with the detrimental effect on communities and families when loved ones are removed. Recognizing that mass incarceration is a seminal human rights challenge of our time, the California legislature has worked to undo some of the resulting damage. But, if legal teams are not available to implement these laws, they are worth only the paper they are printed on.

The Governor's proposed budget cuts \$40 million to the statewide Public Defender Pilot Program (PDPP) in 2023-24, which is the third and final year of the pilot program. We are grateful to this Board for considering the resolution introduced by Supervisor Chan on February 27, 2024, urging the Governor and Legislature to eliminate this proposed cut, which negatively impacts both the Public Defender's Office and the SF Bar Association. **Will you vote AYE on this resolution, and if possible co-sponsor?**

The Freedom Project has done amazing work with available funds, helping reunite 85 individuals with their communities since we began in 2020—47 of whom were serving life sentences.

Clients include a grandmother who served over 30 years before the Governor commuted her sentence. In her own words,

"The Freedom Project was my lifeline, my key. . . . I was charged in 1991 when I was in my 20s and suffering very heavily from substance abuse. I served 31 years before earning parole and being resentenced. I worked hard inside to improve myself and come to terms with why I was there. And The Freedom Project worked hard outside, helping judges and prosecutors understand that I now have the tools, insight, and the knowhow to be a successful mother, grandmother, employee, and community member. In March 2022, I finally came home."

Another example is J.V., who also served more than 30 years in prison before our team successfully fought to return his case to the juvenile court. There, all parties—including the prosecution and the survivors—acknowledged that J. no longer resembles the 16-year-old who had caused harm decades ago.

More than 500 individuals remain in California prisons serving San Francisco sentences. Though data shows very low recidivism rates for elders, 47% of the people in prison on San Francisco cases are over 50, 28% are over 60, and 8% are 70 or older. And despite research showing nearly all young people "age out" of offending, youth offenders account for 31% of imprisoned San Franciscans.

And mass incarceration remains an alarming racial justice issue. Though San Francisco overall is on the lower end of statewide incarceration rates, not so in lower income areas with higher concentration of Black residents. Though the citywide Black population is just 5%, 55% of those in prison from San Francisco are Black.

Finally, the data proves mass incarceration to be a community health issue. Higher incarceration rates are associated with lower life expectancy in communities left behind, along with increased drug-related deaths, poorer mental health profiles, and decreased educational success, with various associated monetary costs.

The Freedom Project's work has just begun. Please support this resolution to avoid cuts to the state funding that allows us to continue.

Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Danielle

Danielle Harris | Managing Attorney | The Freedom Project | San Francisco Public Defender