BOARD of SUPERVISORS

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Alondra Esquivel-Garcia, Youth Development Specialist
Youth Commission

FROM: Lisa Lew, Legislative Clerk
Board of Supervisors

DATE: March 30, 2023

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors have received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Shamann Walton on March 21, 2023:

File No. 230328

Resolution supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 912, The SAFE Act, authored by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, to reinvest prison closure savings into community crime reduction programs.

If you have any additional comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: bos.legislation@sfgov.org

cc: Joshua Rudy Ochoa, Youth Commission

[Supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 912 (Jones-Sawyer) - The SAFE Act]

Resolution supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 912, The SAFE Act, authored by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, to reinvest prison closure savings into community crime reduction programs.

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill No. 912 (AB 912), the Strategic Anti-Violence Funding Efforts Act, also known as the SAFE Act, authored by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, will reinvest cost savings from prison closures into programs that reduce violence, provide diversion opportunities, and deliver critical community supports including mental health, education, and vocational services; and

WHEREAS, On December 6, 2022, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) announced the closure and deactivation of two additional prisons and with the closure of these facilities, the California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) estimates an annual cost savings of $235.3 million; and

WHEREAS, Reductions in the prison population are the direct result of the State Legislature's advancement of sensible legislation and budget items to improve public safety, and advance justice and equity; and

WHEREAS, Rather than returning to the General Fund, it is imperative these savings are kept within the State Legislature's crime prevention budget and reinvested into effective strategies proven to further reduce crime and violence; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown health-based approaches have been successful in curbing violence through applied, skill-based prevention programs and addressing youth mental health and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is crucial in mitigating long-term

effects, such as substance abuse, mental illness, chronic health problems, and criminality; and

WHEREAS, Existing programs have been successful in providing crucial resources and early intervention to youth throughout California; and

WHEREAS, For instance, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) is a nationally-recognized skills-based group intervention to relieve PTSD symptoms, depression, and general anxiety among children exposed to trauma; Children are taught skills to deal with stress such as relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and social problem-solving; and

WHEREAS, Because CBITS has shown consistent success in deterring violence through early intervention, it is crucial that the program is expanded to the top six counties with the highest homicide rates; specifically, CBITS has consistently helped reduce symptoms of depression among students and students who participated earlier in the intervention academically surpassed those who engaged later; and

WHEREAS, First established in 2018, the Youth Reinvestment Grant (YRG) provides funds to local agencies and Native American tribes to implement culturally relevant, trauma-informed diversion programs for minors and since then, nearly $60 million has been committed to agencies and tribes throughout the state, proving to yield effective results; and

WHEREAS, For instance, CARAS: Project Evolve's YRG-funded initiative saw a 67% reduction in youth arrests from 2019 to 2021, far exceeding the program's initial 30% reduction goal; and

WHEREAS, Further, evidence-based, focused deterrence programs that engage high-risk individuals susceptible to committing violence or reoffending have proven to reduce violence; For example, Oakland's Ceasefire strategy partners local government with community organizations to provide tailored services to support high-risk individuals in

stepping away from violence and within a five-year span, Oakland experienced a 43% reduction in homicides and a 50% reduction in non-fatal shootings; and

WHEREAS, Creating safe spaces during peak times of violence has also played a crucial role in prevention and diversion; for example, the Summer Night Lights, a component of the Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD) Comprehensive Strategy in Los Angeles, provides extended programming, sports leagues, and spaces for recreation, employment opportunities, and access to local resources and as shown with the success of GRYD's Summer Night Lights, recreation and health-based opportunities are an essential part of reinvesting in communities impacted by violence; and

WHEREAS, The SAFE Act, is a comprehensive measure reinvests cost savings from prison closures into programs that reduce violence, provide diversion opportunities, and deliver critical community supports including mental health, education and vocational services; and

WHEREAS, The SAFE Act calls for the reallocation of the $235 million in annual savings from the proposed closure of two prisons in the 2023-24 state budget and those funds will go to the following programs:

1) $50 million annually to relocate the Youth Reinvestment Grant Program from the Board of State and Community Corrections to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration with grants available for local jurisdictions and California tribes for trauma-informed diversion programs for minors;
2) $35 million annually to the Department of Justice for the purpose of programs that reduce gang violence and gang involvement, modeled after successful programs like Ceasefire in Oakland that resulted in a 43% reduction in homicides and a 50% reduction in non-fatal shootings;

3) $50 million annually to the State Department of Public Health, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to provide operational grants to School-based Health Centers and provide health and mental health services to children on school sites;

4) $50 million annually to the California Health and Human Services Agency to support a pilot program for Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) in Alameda, Fresno, Merced, Tulane, Kern and Los Angeles; this program supports early trauma-informed interventions for school-aged children experiencing extreme traumatic events in support of their health, well-being and community stability;

5) $50 million annually to the Department of Parks and Recreation in support of grants to local governments and community-based organizations to create new parks and fund recreation and health-based opportunities during peak times of violence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby supports California Assembly Bill No. 912 and urges the California State Legislature to pass this bill to reinvest cost savings from prison closures into programs that reduce violence, provide diversion opportunities, and deliver critical community supports including mental health, education, and vocational services; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the California Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins, California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, California Public Safety Committee Chair and the Bill's primary sponsor Assembly Member Reginald Jones-Sawyer, California Assembly Appropriations Committee Chair Chris Holden, and Governor Gavin Newsom.