

RECEIVED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SAN FRANCISCO

2017 FEB 16 AM 9:40

BY *AB*

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDER

JEFF ADACHI — PUBLIC DEFENDER
MATT GONZALEZ — CHIEF ATTORNEY



February 16, 2017

Budget and Finance Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Legislative Chamber, Room 250
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Re: Item 161289 [Public Employment - Amendment to the Annual Salary Ordinance for the Office of Public Defender - Legal Unit to Defend Immigrants from Deportation]—Support

To Supervisors Cohen, Tang, and Yee,

I am the Immigration Attorney at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. I apologize that I am unable to attend today's Budget hearing. I was previously scheduled to speak at a training entitled: *Preparing for a New Phase in Immigration Enforcement* at the Bar Association of San Francisco. In my absence, I write in support of Item 161289—which would expand the Public Defender's capacity to represent detained non-citizens in immigration court in these incredibly trying times.

The Trump Administration, fanning xenophobic flames of hate, is planning for a program of mass deportation—which necessarily entails a plan for mass detention. The President has already ordered the construction of new immigration detention facilities, the hiring of thousands of new immigration officers, and the prioritizing of *all* undocumented people for arrest, detention, and deportation. Just this week, ICE agents raided neighborhoods in California, arbitrarily rounding up people and holding them for deportation.

In the midst of these unparalleled attacks, San Francisco must act decisively. It must take steps to assure that detained non-citizens have basic rights, including the right to an attorney if they cannot afford one. In high-stakes deportation proceedings, a non-citizen's life, family, and livelihood is at stake. While most detained non-citizens have viable claims for relief, most waive those claims because they do not have a lawyer, and are unaware that they have a chance at obtaining lawful immigration status. However, if non-citizens are represented in a fair, legal proceeding, they will have a better chance at success; and, our communities, and our city, will be a better place.

The city has already funded non-profits to provide rapid response and non-detained representation, but it has yet to address the detained immigrant population in a meaningful way. The Public Defender's Office is the only organization in San Francisco offering to take on hundreds of new detained removal cases. The Public Defender's Office is accustomed to managing a large docket of high stakes detained matters, and has the technical skill, resources

Adult Division - HOJ
555 Seventh Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
P: 415.553.1671
F: 415.553.9810
www.sfpublicdefender.org

Juvenile Division - YGC
375 Woodside Avenue, Rm. 118
San Francisco, CA 94127
P: 415.753.7601
F: 415.566.3030

Juvenile Division - JJC
258A Laguna Honda Blvd.
San Francisco, CA 94116
P: 415.753.8174
F: 415.753.8175

Clean Slate
P: 415.553.9337
www.sfpublicdefender.org/services

Community Justice Center
P: 415.202.2832
F: 415.563.8506

Bayview Magic
P: 415.558.2428
www.bayviewmagic.org

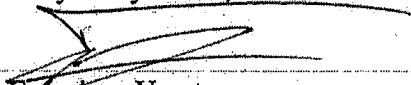
MoMagic
P: 415.567.0400
www.momagic.org

and ancillary capacity to provide high quality representation in all of the cases it handles. The Public Defender will also work with non-profits to accept referrals, and coordinate services regionally with a mutual goal of assuring a true right to counsel for all immigrants facing deportation.

I have spent the last decade defending non-citizens against deportation in the San Francisco Immigration Court. I helped build the city's first immigration Rapid Response Network in 2008, and provided front line deportation defense to non-citizens arrested during illegal immigration raids. Based on my training and experience, I firmly believe that the Public Defender's Office is the organization best equipped to handle a large number of detained deportation cases. I am not alone—the vast majority of immigrant legal service providers in San Francisco also support this initiative—because, quite simply, it is the right thing to do.

By supporting this initiative—the City and County of San Francisco can, once again, make a strong statement in support of immigrant rights amidst a terrifying and xenophobic climate of hate.

Very Truly Yours,



Francisco Ugarte
Immigration Attorney