

**From:** [Truong, Austin \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Haney, Matt \(BOS\)](#); [Mar, Gordon \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance to Close County Jail #4—SUPPORT (File Number 200372)  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2020 11:28:15 PM  
**Attachments:** [Support - Letter for Ordinance to Close County Jail #4.pdf](#)  
[Close 850 Public Comment.pdf](#)

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Dear Clerk John Carroll and Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones well.

We are writing to thank you for your courage and for doing what is right for all San Franciscans.

Unfortunately, the Commissioners will be in class when the Government Audit & Oversight Committee (GAO) meets and would not be able to speak during public comment tomorrow.

Please see the attached support letter from the San Francisco Youth Commission and Individual Public Comment statements from Commissioners in support of closing County Jail #4.

With gratitude,  
Austin

**\*Do you and/or your organization support the local Vote16SF movement that would expand voting rights to 16 & 17 year olds? Fill out this [endorsement form](#) if you do!\***

**\*Whether you're just getting started or already have a plan in action, we want you to [JoinTheYouthCommission](#). Have a seat at the table and bring your ideas forward. [Apply now](#). [Join a Meet and Greet Session](#). \***

## **Austin Truong | They**

*Community Partnerships Specialist*

*Transformative Justice Committee: Staff*

Pronouns Used: they & them

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April 29, 2020

Government Audit & Oversight Committee  
San Francisco City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**SUBJECT: Ordinance to Close County Jail #4 (BOS File No. 200372) – Letter of Support**

Dear Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

The Executive Committee of the San Francisco Youth Commission, composed of the undersigned members, strongly urges you to support Supervisor Fewer’s ordinance amending the Administrative Code to require the City to close County Jail #4 (CJ4), located on the seventh floor of the Hall of Justice, by November 1, 2020. It is essential to the health and well-being of all of San Francisco for 850 Bryant to close without out-of-county transfers or expansions of jailing through electronic monitoring and jail-bed construction. In addition to yourselves, the legislation is sponsored by a total of eight Supervisors, including Shamann Walton, Hillary Ronen, Dean Preston, and Ahsha Safaí. The Youth Commission has previously supported the closure of County Jail #4, notably opposing the legislation to build a new jail at 850 Bryant St in 2015 (see YC File No. [1516-RBM-11](#)) and supporting the hearings to consider the reports of the Work Group to Re-envision the Jail Project in May 2018 (YC File No. [1718-RBM-10](#)) and October 2018 (YC File No. [1819-RBM-03](#)). The Youth Commission has also reiterated its support for alternatives to incarceration in every annual Budget and Policy Priorities report it has issued since 2015.

Currently, due to the ongoing public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Shelter in Place orders implemented at both the County and State levels, the Youth Commission is unable to meet to weigh in on this current legislation. However, given the importance of this legislation, the members of Executive Committee of the Youth Commission wish to remind you of the Youth Commission’s history of support for closing County Jail #4

The closure of County Jail #4 is long overdue; the Hall of Justice is seismically unsafe and has posed a physical threat to people’s safety for far too long. Incarcerated people should not be in such a dilapidated facility, nor should deputy sheriffs, jail health employees, or any other personnel be working there.

Furthermore, the spread of COVID-19 has made the need for the closure of CJ4 all the more urgent. The current crisis has shed even more light on how imprisonment and jailing jeopardize public health, and that even earthquake-safe jails are unsafe and dangerous. Allowing an institution like County Jail #4 to remain open during the time of COVID-19, or expanding San Francisco’s capacity to incarcerate with more cells or jail beds, places everyone inside at risk of contracting the virus, and worsens the probability of a spike in contraction across all of the Bay Area’s communities—this includes jail staff, who return home to their families.

Closing County Jail #4, stopping out-of-country transfers to Santa Rita Jail, and ending any and all expansions of jailing through electronic monitoring or jail-bed construction are essential steps in caring for and protecting all San Francisco residents, especially the poor, people experiencing homelessness,

the LGBTQI community, immigrants, and people of color. The closure of County Jail #4 will save San Francisco an estimated \$25 million per year, which is money better spent on community resources, including: housing, healthcare, meaningful employment, access to healthy food, and mental health and substance use treatment. The City, too, is already below the maximum allowable 1,044 incarcerated people required by this legislation to close CJ4.

For all these reasons, the San Francisco Youth Commission urges you to forward this item to the full Board immediately, with positive recommendation.

Sincerely,



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Josephine Cureton  
Chair  
San Francisco Youth Commission

*Signed on behalf of the membership of the Youth Commission's Executive Committee:*

Josephine Cureton  
Sarah Cheung  
Calvin Quick  
Amara Santos  
Crystal Chan

**Josephine Cureton**

Good morning Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

I'm Josephine Cureton, and I currently serve as the District 4 Representative and Chair of the San Francisco Youth Commission. I am imploring you to support Supervisor Fewer's ordinance to close County Jail #4 at 850 Bryant Street. The Youth Commission has historically supported decarceration, most recently around the closure of San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. Closing 850 Bryant and stopping out-of-county transfers to Santa Rita are essential steps in caring for and protecting all SF residents, especially the poor, the houseless, LGBTQI+ people, immigrants, and people of color. This has become even more pressing in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The closure will also save our city an estimated \$25 million per year, which is better spent on community resources youth are in dire need of: affordable, housing, healthcare, employment, access to food and health resources, and transportation. Not only would we save money, but 850 Bryant is not safe enough to hold anyone, especially our community members who need the most support and resources. With the jail population currently below 800, the City is already more than 200 people below the target number of 1,044 required by this legislation. It is beyond time we shutter the jail at 850 Bryant for good. Vote yes on Supervisor Fewer's ordinance to shut down 850 Bryant now.

Best,

Josephine Cureton, D4  
Chair of Youth Commission

**Amara Santos**

Hi Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

I am D11's Youth Commission Amara Santos in San Francisco's Excelsior neighborhood. I ask you to support Supervisor Fewer's ordinance to close 850 Bryant St. Closing 850 Bryant and stopping out-of-country transfers to Santa Rita are essential steps in caring for and protecting all SF residents, especially the poor, the houseless, LGBTQI people, immigrants and Black and Brown communities especially in the midst of the COVID crisis. The closure will also save our city an estimated \$25 million per year, which is better spent on community resources we are in dire need of: affordable housing, healthcare, meaningful employment, access to healthy food, mental health and substance use treatment and overall more investing in San Francisco's most vulnerable communities. With the jail population currently below 800, the City is already more than 200 people below the target number of 1,044 required by this legislation. It's high time we shutter the jail at 850 Bryant for good. We've heard many people say once the pandemic is over, we'll all be able to go back to "normal". Quite frankly, we as the people can't go back. The normal was not sustainable for any marginalized communities. This pandemic has exposed the flaws in virtually all of the American institutions, including the (in)justice system. Now that these issues are undeniable in front of us, we must do better.

Vote yes on Supervisor Fewer's ordinance to shut down 850 Bryant now.

Best wishes,  
Amara Santos, D11  
Pronouns she/her

**Arsema Asfaw**

Hi Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

My name is Arsema Asfaw, Mayoral Appointee, living in D5.

I would just emphasize that closure of 850 has been a priority for us for a while now and us pushing for it since this isn't a new concept. This building has been marked for demolition since 1996 and has been declared seismically unsafe, which puts people held in the jail and jail workers at grave risk. In 2017, City Administrator Naomi Kelly reinforced the calls of community, engineers, and other city leaders by naming a closure date of end of 2019. Midway through the year, no plan to close the jail has been implemented. With COVID-19 the circumstances have changed drastically and it's no longer about keeping our promise but about putting the health and well-being of the people of San Francisco before politics.

Best,  
Arsema Asfaw, D5 resident

**Nora Hylton**

Hi Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

My name is Nora Hylton, I am a student and resident of San Francisco's District 5 and the Chair of the Youth Commission's Transformative Justice committee. As a life long san francisco resident, I urge you to vote for the closure of 850 Bryant. Closing 850 Bryant is an important step in caring for San Francisco's most vulnerable communities, such as young people, system impacted people, houseless people, black and brown people and more. San Francisco has always been considered a city that is on the forefront of change. By closing 850 Bryant, as a city we will be moving away from cycles of incarceration and oppression, and towards a future of community care and community investment. As someone who believes that as a city we can do more to protect our communities, and that we can truly become the progressive city we claim to be, I urge you to shut down 850 Bryant and stop out of country transfers to Santa Rita.

Best,  
Nora Hylton, resident of D5  
Chair of Transformative Justice Committee

**Austin Truong**

Dear Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

My name is Austin Truong, staff at the Youth Commission and born and raised in San Francisco. As we are currently staying at home and wondering when we can be reunited with our loved ones and wander outside freely; we cannot forget those behind bars who are always wondering, always isolated, always restricted than you and I will ever be asked to endure even during this pandemic. We have the power to do something for OUR people. We can and must work together to build a world where we can all be free and together once more.

Best,

Austin Truong, D6  
Staff of Youth Commission

**Sarah Cheung**

Hi Supervisors Mar, Peskin, and Haney,

My name is Sarah Cheung, and I serve as the District 1 Commissioner and Vice Chair of the San Francisco Youth Commission. I urge you to support Supervisor Fewer's ordinance for the closure of 850 Bryant. The closure of County Jail #4 is long overdue, not only are conditions seismically unsafe, now the spread of COVID-19 jeopardizes the health of those inside the institution, thus the health of our city. Additionally, the City is already below the maximum allowable 1,044 incarcerated people required by this legislation to close CJ4--as of April 17, 2020, the jail count population was 717. I believe that it would be beneficial to save an estimated \$25 million from shutting down 850, and use that for community resources that address the most pressing issues in San Francisco, such as housing, healthcare, access to meaningful employment, mental health and substance use treatment, and to invest in restorative alternatives to incarceration. This would ultimately have a larger and more positive impact on our communities, especially for the marginalized communities that are most affected by these issues and disproportionately constitute our city's incarcerated population. You hold the power to dissolve systemic cycles of oppression, you hold the power to protect San Francisco residents and prioritize public health above all--for the people, shut down 850 now.

Best,

Sarah Cheung, resident of D1