

December 7, 2015

To the Public Protection Committee:

The Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition appreciates the attention the Public Protection Committee has given to the issue of racial disparity in Contra Costa County's criminal justice system. The data gathered by the committee has shown that African-Americans and Latinos are disproportionately represented in Contra Costa County in criminal prosecutions, probation supervision, and jury service. The Coalition believes that these disparities are inconsistent with the ideals of our county and that responsible measures can be taken to reduce the disparities that exist.

In light of this information and the Public Protection Committee's commitment to addressing this disproportionality, the Coalition asks that the Board of Supervisors form a Racial Justice Taskforce (RJT) composed of traditional justice partners and a diverse array of community stakeholders.

The RJT would be tasked with (1) identifying measures that can be taken to reduce the disparities that are demonstrated by county data and (2) implementing measures to reduce these disparities. Through a facilitated process, members of the RJT would meet periodically to research and select appropriate reforms, oversee the implementation of these reforms, and report on demonstrated outcomes. The RJT should report to the Board of Supervisors and issue periodic reports to the community regarding the County's progress in reducing disparities as demonstrated by updated data.

In order for the RJT to meet its goals, a trained facilitator and/or research entity will be necessary to bring together diverse voices and ensure progress is made. We request that the Board of Supervisors approve funding for an organization competent in identifying and remediating issues of disproportionality and one which also has the expertise to facilitate meetings amongst a broad group of traditional and non-traditional, community-based stakeholders.

The Racial Justice Coalition asks that the committee create the RJT with the expectation that all its members will commit to reducing disparities and working collaboratively with other members to set forth recommendations and implement specific reforms.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues.

The Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition
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