



September 12, 2022

Supervisor Karen Mitchoff, Chair
Supervisor Diane Burgis
Supervisor Candace Andersen
Supervisor John Gioia
Supervisor Federal Glover

CC: Monica Nino, Chief Administrative Officer

Dear Supervisors and County Administrator:

The Contra Costa Budget Justice Coalition (BJC) is writing this letter in support of the 124 families who are awaiting deportation court dates and whose lives may be at stake if proper funding is not allocated towards Stand Together Contra Costa (STCC). It is currently the only program providing pro bono deportation defense legal services in Contra Costa County. This program currently has three deportation defense attorneys to serve the entire county (1 public defender removal defense attorney, 2 Jewish Family and Community Services removal defense attorneys).

In item D.5 the Chief Administrator Office (CAO) is proposing to the Board on September 12th, that the County deny funds for the expansion of this program using AB 109 funds or any other funding streams.

This being the case, we have 2 areas of concern to convey to you:

1. We understand that \$59 million of ARPA fund allocations were to have been decided this coming November by the Board of Supervisors. However, we now understand that \$22 million has already been allocated towards county employees for Covid hazard premium payments. If you're able to allocate ARPA funds outside the November timeframe for this, what prevents allocating \$1.8 million in "bridge funding" for STCC until it can be considered in next year's budget?
2. We're not clear why the County Counsel determined that AB 109 funds were not eligible for funding STCC expansion, in consideration of the fact that AB 109 funds have been used for this program all along, and there is a surplus of \$5 million.

The Case for STCC

- STCC had been asked by various Board members over the years to seek support for additional staffing from Measure X funds as well as the General Fund. The requests have been repeatedly denied, despite clear evidence of demonstrable need. Advocates for these programs worked very hard to get Measure X passed.
- Almost 8,000 deportation cases are pending, and there is a possible new wave coming if

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Title 42 is suspended. There is a waiting list of almost 100 people in need of legal representation.

- Immigrants who are represented by STCC attorneys win about 70% of their cases; those who are unrepresented win about 19% of cases.
- Contra Costa lags our neighboring Counties in meeting the needs of these people, e.g., Alameda has 7 attorneys, and San Francisco has 8.
- **This is a matter of life and death** – people are at risk of being returned to countries they fled for fear of their lives.

Offering in-house immigration legal services in Public Defender's Offices is considered a best practice in holistic defense. Currently, 16 of the 33 Public Defender Offices in California have immigration attorneys on-staff (Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Clara, Fresno, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, Sonoma, Ventura, Yolo, Santa Cruz).

Please fund additional positions at Stand Together Contra Costa to ensure that immigrants are given access to legal services and critical community engagement services

Decision Making Process

At the Finance Committee meeting on July 13th, the Committee expressed strong interest in providing additional funding to the Public Defender's office and STCC. Yet it appears that all options for funding may not have been fully explored and we feel strongly - especially in light of all the requested and extraordinary submissions of data and the history of denying funding - that this important issue deserves a thorough and robust public hearing.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this letter.

On behalf of the Budget Justice Coalition,



Sara Gurdian
Program Manager

Members
350 Contra Costa
AFSCME Local 2700
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Contra Costa
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Bay Area Community Resources

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Choice in Aging
Community Clinics Consortium
Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance
Contra Costa Labor Council
Contra Costa Office of Education
East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy
East Contra Costa Community Alliance
Ensuring Opportunity
First 5 Contra Costa/Family Economic Security Partnership
Food Bank of Contra Costa
Great Richmond Interfaith Program
Healthy Richmond/RCF Connects
Human Services Alliance of Contra Costa
IFPTE Local 21
League of Women Voters Diablo Valley
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Meals on Wheels Senior Outreach
Monument Impact
Multi-Faith Action Coalition
Planned Parenthood of Northern California
Racial Justice Coalition
Richmond Community Foundation
Richmond LAND
Rubicon Programs
Safe Return Project
SEIU Local 1021
SURG
United Latino Voices
And many residents of Contra Costa

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From: John Gioia
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 2:41 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Subject: FW: Support Immigrant Legal Services

John Gioia
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D
El Cerrito, CA 94530
Website: www.cocobos.org/gioia
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Twitter: @supejohngioia

This message is being sent on a public e-mail system and may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

From: Jane Courant <janecourant@gmail.com>
Date: Monday, September 12, 2022 at 1:13 PM
To: John Gioia <John.Gioia@bos.cccounty.us>, "Diane.Burgis@bosccccounty.us" <Diane.Burgis@bosccccounty.us>, SupervisorMitchoff <SupervisorMitchoff@bos.cccounty.us>, District5 <District5@bos.cccounty.us>, Supervisor Candace Andersen <SupervisorAndersen@bos.cccounty.us>
Subject: Support Immigrant Legal Services

Dear Supervisors,

I am a concerned resident of Richmond as well as a member of SURJ Contra Costa, the Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition, SURJ Contra Costa and represent the Richmond Progressive Alliance on Lift Up Contra Costa. I write today to urge you to support giving critically needed funding for Stand Together Contra Costa.

Stand Together Contra Costa conducts free legal clinics in safe and familiar community settings so that immigrants and their families can get individualized legal consultations and structured and customized referrals. Through the program, Contra Costa community members detained by ICE are eligible to receive no-cost legal representation in pursuing bond or release and to receive legal representation in immigration court. Further, offering in-house immigration legal services in Public Defender's Offices is considered a best practice in holistic defense. Currently, 16 of the 33 Public Defender Offices in California have immigration attorneys on-staff (Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Clara, Fresno, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, Sonoma, Ventura, Yolo, Santa Cruz). *However, Stand Together Contra Costa is the only program providing pro bono deportation defense legal services in Contra Costa County.* Stand Together Contra Costa currently has three deportation defense attorneys to serve the *entire* county—only one public defender removal defense attorney plus two

Jewish Family and Community Services removal defense attorneys. It is essential to fund additional positions at Stand Together Contra Costa so that immigrants are given access to legal services and critical community engagement services to keep families together and prevent the heartbreak of deportation.

Sincerely yours,
Jane Courant
6108 Santa Cruz Avenue
Richmond, CA 94804