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21 DEC 16 PM 4:13

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City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 88945 C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TREVA REID AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT
NIKKI FORTUNATO BAS

RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNORS OFFICE TO INSTITUTE COMMON SENSE COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES IN DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES AS A RESULT OF A RECENT COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND TAKE ALL THE NECESSARY ACTIONS THAT PRIORITIZES TRANSPARENCY, COMMON SENSE PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES, AND POPULATION REDUCTION TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is in the midst of a dangerous new COVID-19 outbreak. Currently, 52 youth are infected with the virus and another 237 have already tested positive. All told, the equivalent of almost 45 percent of DJJ's current population is known to have had COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, just 64 percent of DJJ staff are vaccinated against COVID-19 and many interact with youth without wearing a mask. These continued failures are a call to action. The state must step in to prevent further outbreaks by significantly reducing DJJ's population and improving conditions for the youth who remain; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has spread quickly through DJJ due to its cramped, prison-like conditions, including open dormitories. We now know that COVID-19 is easily transmitted in poorly ventilated indoor spaces, like living units or day rooms. We also know that the virus can have severe and lasting effects on young people; and

WHEREAS, children and youth around the world have died or been hospitalized after developing an inflammatory condition that can result from COVID-19, and, as of November 17, 2021, more than 5,000 young people under the age of 30 had died of COVID-19 in the United States. Youth who survive a serious infection may face a lifetime of health repercussions, such as irreversible damage to their lungs, heart, or brain; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its physical risks, each new COVID-19 outbreak puts youth at risk of psychological harm. DJJ administrators rely on restrictive lockdowns as a first line of defense against new cases. This includes nearly around-the-clock isolation in cells as well as limitations on youths' access to school, recreation, or programming. Research has shown that this kind of extended isolation takes a profound emotional toll on young people; and

WHEREAS, this latest DJJ outbreak comes amid a new stage in the pandemic. Despite a better understanding of how the virus spreads and how it can be stopped, caseloads are climbing nationwide, and dangerous new strains are making COVID-19 more transmissible than ever before. As winter approaches, it is the responsibility of our state leaders to use this new knowledge to save lives and reduce the harmful collateral effects of future outbreaks. This duty is greatest in congregate settings, like DJJ, where Californians are living at heightened risk; and

WHEREAS, DJJ must shrink its population in order to reduce the need for isolation and keep youth safe from COVID-19. Given DJJ's antiquated design and communal living units, it is impossible for youth to maintain safe physical distances. In recognition of the dangers of congregate settings, California has released thousands of adults from Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation institutions under State leadership. Yet DJJ's youth were excluded from these opportunities, leaving hundreds of young people in harm's way. To safeguard the mental health and physical well-being of youth, we urge the following immediate actions:

- Meaningfully reduce DJJ's population by offering early release to youth who are within six months of their parole date and/or youth who are medically vulnerable;
- Report COVID-19 data by facility, including vaccination statistics for youth and staff, testing numbers, and a timeline of positive and negative results dating to March 2020;
- Provide all youth and staff with adequate PPE and strictly enforce staff mask-wearing requirements;
- Require staff to meet the same threshold for entering the facilities as outside visitors (full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test within the past 72 hours); and
- Provide youth and staff with high-quality educational information about the benefits of vaccination; and

WHEREAS, following its first reported COVID-19 case last June, DJJ was slow to implement basic safety precautions, such as enforced mask-wearing, universal testing, or a halt to intake. The result was a series of fast-moving outbreaks that put hundreds of youth and staff at risk. DJJ's mishandling of its earliest outbreaks serves as a warning today. State leaders must respond quickly to ensure that youth are kept safe – both from the virus and the devastating effects of isolation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That City Council urges Governor's office to institute common sense COVID-19 safety measures in Division of Juvenile Justice Facilities as a result of the recent COVID-19 outbreak and take all the necessary actions that prioritizes transparency, common sense public health measures and population reduction to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Division of Juvenile Justice facilities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Council directs the City Administrator to send a copy of this Resolution to Governor Newsom, Jessica Devencenzi, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Senator Nancy Skinner and Assembly member's Mia Bonta and Buffy Wicks.

DEC 21 2021

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

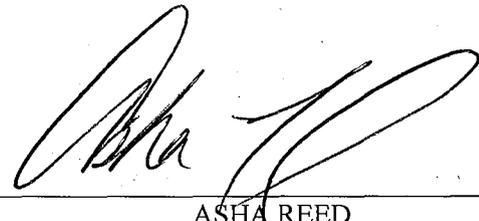
AYES - FIFE, GALLO, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS - 8

NOES - 0

ABSENT - 0

ABSTENTION - 0

ATTEST:



ASHA REED

City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

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