



Solano County

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Legislation Text

File #: 19-251, **Version:** 1

Adopt and present a resolution recognizing April 21-27, 2019 as Reentry Week in Solano County (Chairwoman Hannigan)

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Sheriff's Office, together with Probation and Health and Social Services, recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt and present a resolution recognizing April 21-27, 2019 as Reentry Week in Solano County.

SUMMARY:

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice launched "National Reentry Week" during the last week of April, in recognition that every year approximately 11 million people are released from local jails and state prisons across the country. Reentry programs are designed to address transition gaps, provide supportive services, reduce recidivism, and improve employment, education, housing, health, and child welfare outcomes. The Sheriff's Office, Probation, and Health and Social Services recognize the need to raise public awareness about the barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face and to bring attention to the integrated evidenced-based programs and services that are in place to support them.

Solano County has significantly improved its reentry services through an integrated approach and has launched a *Transitioning from Jail to Community* initiative, an evidence-based model for community reentry through National Institute of Corrections designed to advance coordinated and collaborative relationships between jail and local community organizations. Solano was awarded a grant for technical assistance with this initiative, the only county in California, through the Crime and Justice Institute. In addition, a Council on Reentry Solutions has been created with members including the Sheriff's Office, Probation, Health and Social Services, Collaborative Courts, and several community-based organizations to strengthen the system-level approach to reentry and support the justice-involved population to be successful as they transition back into the community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs associated with preparing this agenda item are minimal and are included in the Department's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget. There is no additional impact to the County General Fund. The costs associated with preparation and purchase of the resolution materials and plaque are included in the Board's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

Recognizing April 21-27, 2019 as Reentry Week in Solano County will call attention to the needs and challenges of the reentry population as well as highlight the evidenced-based practices being employed in the County to reduce barriers to successful reentry. Without a successful reentry, individuals are more likely to recidivate and return to incarceration.

In a study that followed 404,638 people who reentered their communities, 67.8 percent were arrested within 3 years of release, and 76.6 percent within 5 years of release (Recidivism Special Report, U.S. Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). Contributing socioeconomic factors include:

- Approximately 50% of incarcerated adults do not have a high school diploma;
- Employment rates and earning levels are often low before incarceration as a result of limited education, low job skill levels, and the prevalence of physical and mental health problems (Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2003);
- Many incarcerated individuals experience high rates of homelessness. A survey conducted in the Solano County Jail in 2017 found that 37% of the population identified as being homeless. Nationally, studies found that 15.3 percent of incarcerated individuals had been homeless some time during the year before they were incarcerated. Individuals with mental illness experience being homeless at the even higher rate of 20% (Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study);
- The justice-involved population experiences chronic health conditions, infectious diseases, substance use disorders, and mental illnesses at much higher rates than the general population (The Health Status of Soon-To-Be-Released Prisoners: A Report to Congress, vol. 1).

These socioeconomic factors contribute to initial incarceration as well as recidivism. Incarceration exacerbates the challenges that the reentry population face.

“The long-term, sometimes lifetime, impact of a criminal record will keep many people from obtaining employment, accessing housing, higher education, loans and credit-even if they have paid their debt to society, turned their lives around, are qualified and are unlikely to reoffend. At the same time, research shows that people who stay out of trouble for just a few years are largely indistinguishable from the general population in terms of their odds of being arrested again in the future. Further, pro-social activities such as employment, education and civic engagement-the very things that people with criminal records are often barred from participating in-reduce recidivism” (Federal Interagency Reentry Council).

It is incumbent upon us to ensure that individuals who are transitioning from jail to the community receive supportive services, achieve financial sustainability, obtain housing, support their families, and become a contributing member of their community. As a part of the County’s efforts to preparing individuals for re-entry, the Rourk Vocational Training Center was dedicated on January 29, 2019, to provide them with educational and vocational training programs. The first class at the Center was held on March 20, 2019.

In recognition of April 21-27, 2019 as Reentry Week, Solano County is hosting a *State of Reentry in Solano County: Adopting a Multi-System Approach* on April 24th, 2019, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the County Events Center at 601 Texas Street in Conference Room A. The half-day meeting will include an orientation to Solano county’s Re-Entry Programs, Keynote Speaker Kim Carter, and networking opportunities.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose not to adopt the resolution; however, this alternative is not recommended as this week is an opportunity to raise awareness and highlight solutions.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Sheriff’s Office worked in partnership with Probation and Health and Social Services.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION