



December 1, 2015

President Breed
Members of the Board of Supervisors
San Francisco City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, #244
San Francisco, CA 94102

Via email

Oppose Construction of the Rehabilitation and Detention Facility

Dear President Breed and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

The ACLU of Northern California respectfully urges the Board to reject the upcoming proposal to finance the construction of a new jail in San Francisco. Although there is wide agreement that Jails 3 and 4 in the Hall of Justice need to be shuttered, there is no consensus that those jails should be replaced with a new one. Instead, as the ACLU and scores of local advocates and criminal justice officials – including District Attorney Gascón – have made clear, rather than sinking more resources into incarceration, the City should invest in smarter approaches to crime prevention and public safety, including treatment for underlying issues such as substance abuse disorders and mental illness.

The quarter of a billion dollars that will be spent on building a new jail for just a few hundred inmates, would be much better spent on treatment, services and supportive housing for those who will otherwise continue to cycle in and out of the criminal justice system. Money would also be better spent on expanding pretrial release and diversion programs to ensure our existing jail beds are not filled up with those who could be safely released into alternative programs. Investing in these alternatives to incarceration and sustainable support programs will not only reduce the need for jail space, but will go greater lengths to improving public safety.

In light of the downward trend in the local jail population, the great need for treatment and supportive housing for people with mental health issues and substance abuse disorders, and the availability of alternatives to incarceration and diversion programs in which the City could further invest, we urge the Board to reject the proposal for the new jail facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micaela Davis".

Micaela Davis
Staff Attorney

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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