



PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERS

YOUTH ALIVE!
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April 30, 2018

Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services
California State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814

HONORARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

HON. DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

EDWARD JAMES OLMO
Actor

HON. BARBARA LEE
United States Representative

RE: The Youth Reinvestment Fund – SUPPORT

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Berkeley, CA

ANNE C. MARKS
Executive Director
Youth ALIVE!
Oakland, CA

Dear Chair Skinner:

California has the opportunity to lead the conversation on youth justice reform by allocating resources to create a Youth Reinvestment Fund, focused on alternatives to prison for youth. Youth ALIVE! strongly urges you to approve a \$100 million addition to the state budget in order to fund proven youth diversion programs that would keep California's young people out of prison and give them the second chances they deserve.

Youth ALIVE! is a violence prevention and intervention organization that helps young people become leaders and advocates for the change they would like to see in their communities through our Teens on Target Program, mentors and supports healing for young people who have been violently injured through our Caught in the Crossfire program, and works with families grieving in the wake of a homicide through our Khadafy Washington Project.

Spending time in prison often becomes a life sentence for youth. Kids who have been behind bars are less likely to graduate from high school, more prone to unemployment as adults and more likely to return to the system. Community-based youth diversion programs are alternatives to jail that give students the counseling and support they need to get their lives back on track. In Los Angeles County, youth who go to prison are three times more likely to reoffend than those who participate in youth diversion programs. Thousands of kids are eligible for diversion. The only barrier preventing local jurisdictions from giving youth alternatives to jail is often the lack of resources for programs.

Not only is youth diversion more effective than incarceration, it is also cheaper. It costs \$250,000 to jail one kid for one year in Los Angeles County, but only \$5,000 to put one youth through a diversion program. Youth diversion saves money, and it's good policy. California has a responsibility to put its budgetary weight behind effective programs to help our youth succeed.

With the Youth Reinvestment Fund, California can take an important step in providing critical support to the young people of color and LGBTQ youth who are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system, while taking a stand that says our children are worth a second chance. We strongly support a \$100 million investment in the future of California and its youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anne Marks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anne Marks
Executive Director

cc: Chair Shirley Weber, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5 on Public Safety
Chair Phil Ting, Assembly Budget Committee
Chair Holly Mitchell, Senate Budget Committee