

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to express my full support for, and urge you to approve, item 26 to ensure the continued operation of the Los Angeles Justice Fund (LAJF) for current and new cases in the City of Los Angeles. We urge you to approve this item, including supporting language to ensure flexibility to serve new cases and new families trying to get through this crisis now. The fact is COVID has not stopped this Administration from attacking immigrant families. And it is painfully clear that ICE is failing to keep immigrant families safe from COVID 19 in California detention centers. It's time to pass the amendment and expand eligibility to include both current and new cases. We must allow LAJF to address the current COVID 19 crisis by helping families going through uncertainty right now. We need to allow (but not require) LAJF lawyers who have capacity to take on additional cases to do so with the bridge funding for this next year. We think this is critical to ensuring that LAJF reaches as many people in need as is possible in this time of crisis. It does not require the addition of new funds. It just allows lawyers to do the address our current reality. By giving legal service providers (LSPs) the flexibility to be responsive, the City will address a critical need that has been heightened by the pandemic. LAJF will get folks out of detention during a pandemic and we all should be fighting for the right to do that. With nearly 3.5 million immigrants living in Los Angeles and growing numbers of COVID 19 positive cases in California detention centers, including the Adelanto Detention Center where most LA residents are transferred to, it is imperative that the Los Angeles City Council approved funding today with no restrictions on taking on new cases. Among the many challenges that the immigrant community faces today as a result of the COVID 19, it is clear that the risk of being forced to remain in inhumane and medically unsafe detention centers has not ended but increased. Detention centers such as Adelanto are denying sanitary conditions and medical assistance to immigrants in facilities with COVID 19 positive cases. As COVID-19 rages on, City Council should not and must not deny legal representation to new cases. The Trump Administration has built an expanded deportation machine, as well as a culture of hate and racism in our community, that will last long after (and if) Trump is someday gone. We need the city to take action now. Since 2017,

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued removal operations in Los Angeles. Unlike criminal proceedings, individuals in the immigration system are not provided court-appointed counsel to assist and represent them in their case. In Los Angeles County approximately 68% of detained individuals and 26% of non-detained individuals lacked legal counsel. Evidently detained and released immigrants in Los Angeles who had legal counsel were five times more likely to win their case than those without legal representation. Among non-detained immigrants who had access to legal representation were four times more likely to win their case than those who were unrepresented. It is important to note that the LAJF has been critical in responding and spearheading efforts to mitigate the draconian and inhumane policies of the Trump Administration. LAJF attorneys and advocates have provided and can continue to provide support and respite, as they are on the ground, in detention centers, and in immigration courts tracking cases, seeing the changing policies, and developing real-time solutions that can be best-practice models for others facing similar circumstances. Both the CLA and the independent evaluation team, VERA, report that not only has LAJF met expectations, but also exceeded them AND that there still remains a critical need for this program to protect immigrant Angelenos. We need the LAJF renewed at its full level of \$1 million to ensure a just recovery for all Angelenos and to counter this administration's cruel detention and deportation machine. Today, in the middle of a pandemic, LAJF attorneys continue doing the work. Despite our call to the federal government to free all individuals from detention that has not been the case. In complete opposite, detention centers like Adelanto are still considering expanding their number of beds. As a result, I write to respectfully urge your support for the funding allocated for the LAJF to ensure the protection of non-citizen Angelenos caught in the deportation machine. We cannot stand by and watch our neighbors and families torn apart when we know that we have the ability to do something to protect them. Thank you.