

## Communication from Public

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**Comments for Public Posting:** Thank you council members, my name is Chelsea Bell and I am an immigration attorney and resident of Los Angeles City. I have a general comment regarding Los Angeles Justice Fund. I have worked almost exclusively with LAJF clients since 2018 and am here today to urge this council to renew the funding for LAJF. The City of Los Angeles must reaffirm its commitment to protect the millions of immigrant Angelenos that are part of our City's social fabric by not only renewing, but by creating a permanent Los Angeles Justice Fund to ensure due process for all! As my colleague Rabeya noted earlier, the fact that we have a new president and a new administration is not enough to stop the deportation machine. The day that Biden signed the 100-day moratorium on deportations, ICE officers here in Los Angeles were working to deport children before the implementation of the moratorium. There is obviously a need to reform policy at a federal level, but ICE operates predominantly at a local level – from enforcement to detention to legal proceedings – those are the ways that the immigration system effects Angelenos. And the only real way we can buttress any federal policy so that it truly has an impact on a local level for immigrant Angelenos, is for you all to renew and make permanent the Los Angeles Justice Fund. I have countless clients who will not be assisted by federal policy changes because they are currently in deportation proceedings. Most of these clients have been residents of LA for decades, have worked and contributed to the vibrancy of Los Angeles, and have families here. LAJF is one of the only local support systems that actually assists Angelenos who are in deportation proceedings. In fact, LAJF was the first time that the City of LA has provided funding for removal defense work, and without renewed funding, the programs that we have worked so hard on for the past few years will fold, and the infrastructure created that the City has invested so much in, will collapse. This is a racial justice issue as well as a human rights issue. I cannot tell you how horrific the conditions are for people detained at the immigration detention facility in Adelanto – which is where anyone who is detained by ICE in Los Angeles is taken. Thankfully, before COVID, the presence of LAJF attorneys at the facility was positively influencing how ICE and GEO operated it, however with COVID and remote working, ICE and GEO have completely disregarded

state and federal health guidelines and the facility has deteriorated even further. ICE and GEO are being reprimanded by Federal Judges who are fed up with their intentional misrepresentation of the facts, and yet still – they blatantly ignore and actively refuse to protect the people in their facility from COVID. If a federal judge's court order plus public admonishments don't make ICE and GEO get their act together, it is clear that we have to take action on a local level. One of LAJF's biggest successes is helping Angelenos get out of detention and fight their cases while they remain safely at home with their families. For the reasons I've mentioned here and so many others, I implore you all to not only renew LAJF but to make it a permanent program here in LA. Thank you.