

Communication from Public

Name: Katherine Traverso

Date Submitted: 01/25/2021 03:22 PM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: LAJF City Council Hearing Statement 1/26/2021 Good morning, my name is Katherine Traverso and I'm here on behalf of the Vera Institute of Justice. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and support a continued Los Angeles Justice Fund. We urge the City of Los Angeles to secure the Los Angeles Justice Fund as a permanent program with increased funding, and without restrictions for access based upon prior interaction with the criminal justice system, or residency, in order to ensure due process for all. The Fund is needed now more than ever. With COVID-19 cases near peak in LA, and disproportionately impacting Black and Latino Angelenos, we must ensure the health and safety of everyone in our communities. The stakes for our immigrant communities and those in immigration detention could not be higher, and legal representation can mean the difference between life and death. This is because without zealous legal representation, release from detention is nearly impossible. Immigrants who are represented are 3.5 times more likely to receive bond and up to 10 times more likely to establish a right to remain in the United States. Adelanto Detention Center, where most people served by LAJF are detained, had the largest outbreak of any detention center in the nation this fall. Release of many detained there was possible with the assistance of LAJF lawyers. Even with a new federal administration, the impacts of years of criminalization, mass detention, family separation, and deportation of Los Angeles immigrant community members and their families will continue unless local leaders take bold action. This includes publicly funded deportation defense programs, such as those in more than 40 communities in 18 states, including 21 partner sites of Vera's SAFE Initiative, have funded deportation defense programs. The public overwhelmingly supports government-funded lawyers for all, including people in immigration court, as shown in a recent poll by Vera where 92% of people surveyed in Los Angeles County expressed support. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Talia Inlender

Date Submitted: 01/25/2021 05:06 PM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Talia Inlender. I am a supervising attorney at Public Counsel, where I oversee our agency's LA Justice Fund team providing legal services to community members in immigration detention. Until LA Justice Fund, Public Counsel had no capacity to provide in-house legal representation to immigrants detained at Adelanto - the only remaining detention center in the LA area. LA Justice Fund changed that. We, along with our partner agencies, have built critical infrastructure for removal defense services where there was none. Our clients include a Black survivor of domestic violence, an unhoused LA resident racially profiled by railroad police colluding with ICE, and an LA husband and father of 3 US-Citizen children detained outside of his home despite the ranging COVID-19 pandemic. These clients' - and our community's - need for LAJF transcends the political party in power. The cruel enforcement regime that has been built up over decades remains intact. As long as we still have an immigration system based on deportation and detention, many more Angelenos will continue to face separation from their loved ones and community. And make no mistake: those most impacted are our Black and Latinx neighbors. As the disparate racial impacts of the criminal system cascade into the immigration system, immigrants of color feel the double oppression that comes from over-policing from both law enforcement and immigration enforcement. Programs like LA Justice Fund are a critical component of the fight to unravel this unjust system by ensuring due process and accountability in removal proceedings. In this moment of change and opportunity, we should be redoubling our commitment to this fight, not abandoning it in the hopes that someone else will pick up the mantel. We ask that the City of Los Angeles invest in protecting our immigrant community by renewing the LA Justice Fund and making it a permanent program.