

Communication from Public

Name: Judy London

Date Submitted: 03/21/2022 08:18 AM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: Subject: Support the LA Justice Fund and Ensure Due Process for All Dear Councilmembers: My name is Judy London, and I am the Directing Attorney of Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project. We strongly urge you to strengthen and expand the LA Justice Fund when it is heard in the Budget and Finance Committee this coming Monday, Feb. 28th. Specifically, we would like you to support the recommendations coming out of the Jan. 20th hearing of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity Committee where they approved the following recommendations from the CLA report: • Recommendation 1A: the City to move in tandem with County • Recommendation 2B: to fund existing and new cases • Recommendation 3B: to remove the criminal exclusions The City has already earmarked funds for this effort, but has not used those funds, yet. In the meanwhile, in all this time, immigrant Angelenos continue to face attacks from the federal immigration system. Therefore, we urge you to act now to ensure that the City takes action to protect immigrant Angelenos by making the LA Justice Fund a true universal representation program that provides due process for all. Expanding the LA Justice Fund to include all immigrants, regardless of background, is a necessary and important step for racial justice in LA. Excluding those with criminal records from representation only serves to further marginalize the most overpoliced members of our community. As an example, just a few weeks ago, Public Counsel's staff attorney represented an elderly Black Central American who is a long-time resident of Los Angeles County, having arrived in the United States as a teenager. He contributed to our city as a small business owner and is the father of two U.S. adult citizen children. Over 30 years ago, he was convicted of a crime excluding him from LAJF funding – he was sentenced to 365 days in jail. Based on this old conviction, he would not have been eligible for an attorney through our LAJF program. Fortunately, we were able to represent him through other funds. In early March, an immigration judge ordered his release after 7 months in detention, finding he was neither a flight risk or any danger to the community. Before setting a low bond, the judge – on the record – thanked the client's pro bono counsel for providing representation, and noted that without it, the client would likely have continued to linger in detention without the

legal and community support he so needs to move forward with his case. Our client is now receiving the process he is due as well as receiving and providing family support in his community. In addition to eroding due process, the current criminal exclusions actually increase the program's administrative costs and overhead. A person's criminal history is not immediately apparent, and often requires extensive research, including consultation with courthouses and public defenders, collecting and reviewing records (sometimes from multiple jurisdictions) which individuals often do not have, and conducting legal research to determine whether the conviction falls within a prohibited category. In the Los Angeles Justice Fund pilot program, we had attorneys who spent an estimated 25 percent of their time screening clients to assess criminal history before making a determination to accept a case. Thus, eliminating the criminal carveouts is necessary to make the best use of the City's funding as it would significantly reduce the amount of time and resources spent on screenings as opposed to the critical work of representation. The County of Los Angeles, as well as cities and counties across the country, have already recognized these facts and adopted universal representation programs to protect their immigrant communities, as outlined in this link from the Vera Institute of Justice. It is time for Los Angeles, the city of immigrants, to show strong leadership and do the same. An editorial in La Opinion, from February 16th, supports this step as critical to ensuring justice and due process for all. So, again, I urge you to support the recommendations of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity (IACRE) committee, which approved the CLA report's recommendations 1A, 2B, and 3B. That committee voted on 1/20/22 to continue and strengthen the immigrant representation program while eliminating criminal history exclusions, in order to give all Angelenos the fair process they are due. I call on the Budget and Finance committee to not stand in the way of this necessary progress and do the same. Thank you. Judy London Directing Attorney, Immigrants' Rights Project of Public Counsel

Communication from Public

Name: Theo Perkins

Date Submitted: 03/21/2022 08:58 AM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: RE: Support the LA Justice Fund and Ensure Due Process for All
Dear Councilmember, My name is Theodore Perkins and I am a constituent and a member of the Fountain Theatre. We strongly urge you to strengthen and expand the LA Justice Fund when it is heard in the Budget and Finance Committee this coming Monday, Feb. 28th. Specifically, we would like you to support the recommendations coming out of the Jan. 20th hearing of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity Committee where they approved the following recommendations from the CLA report: Recommendation 1A: the City to move in tandem with County Recommendation 2B: to fund existing and new cases Recommendation 3B: to remove the criminal exclusions The City has already earmarked funds for this effort, but has not used those funds, yet. In the meanwhile, in all this time, immigrant Angelenos continue to face attacks from the federal immigration system. Therefore, we urge you to act now to ensure that the City takes action to protect immigrant Angelenos by making the LA Justice Fund a true universal representation program that provides due process for all. Expanding the LA Justice Fund to include all immigrants, regardless of background, is a necessary and important step for racial justice in LA. Excluding those with criminal records from representation only serves to further marginalize the most overpoliced members of our community. Also, the current criminal exclusions actually increase the program's administrative costs and overhead. A person's criminal history is not immediately apparent, and often requires extensive research, including consultation with courthouses and public defenders, collecting and reviewing records (sometimes from multiple jurisdictions) which individuals often do not have, and conducting legal research to determine whether the conviction falls within a prohibited category. In the Los Angeles Justice Fund pilot program, 1,300 screenings were conducted for applicants ultimately deemed ineligible, with at least one provider estimating that their attorneys spent up to 25% to 30% of their time on screening for criminal history during the pilot program, taking nearly one full day of work for an attorney. This means that legal service providers in the pilot program spent an estimated 9,100 hours conducting screenings for ineligible applicants. That is 9,100 hours that could have been spent on representation. It is

worth noting, however, that despite the burden of time spent on determining criminal status, LAJF grantees still served 742 clients, exceeding the goal of 500 cases set in the pilot. Thus, eliminating the criminal carveouts is necessary to make the best use of the City's funding as it would significantly reduce the amount of time and resources spent on screenings as opposed to the critical work of representation and, in fact, allow LAJF to be even more efficient and even more of a success than it already has been. The County of Los Angeles, as well as cities and counties across the country, have already recognized these facts and adopted universal representation programs to protect their immigrant communities, as outlined in this link from the Vera Institute of Justice. It is time for Los Angeles, the city of immigrants, to show strong leadership and do the same. An editorial in La Opinion, from February 16th, supports this step as critical to ensuring justice and due process for all. So, again, I urge you to support the recommendations of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity (IACRE) committee, which approved the CLA report's recommendations 1A, 2B, and 3B. That committee voted on 1/20/22 to continue and strengthen the immigrant representation program while eliminating criminal history exclusions, in order to give all Angelenos the fair process they are due. I call on the Budget and Finance committee to not stand in the way of this necessary progress and do the same. Thank you.

Theo

Communication from Public

Name: Carolina Goodman

Date Submitted: 03/21/2022 10:46 AM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, My name is Carolina Goodman and I am with the League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles. We strongly urge you to strengthen and expand the LA Justice Fund when it is heard in the Budget and Finance Committee today. Specifically, we would like you to support the recommendations coming out of the Jan. 20th hearing of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity Committee where they approved the following recommendations from the CLA report:
Recommendation 1A: the City to move in tandem with County
Recommendation 2B: to fund existing and new cases
Recommendation 3B: to remove the criminal exclusions The City has already earmarked funds for this effort, but has not used those funds, yet. In the meanwhile, in all this time, immigrant Angelenos continue to face attacks from the federal immigration system. Therefore, we urge you to act now to ensure that the City takes action to protect immigrant Angelenos by making the LA Justice Fund a true universal representation program that provides due process for all. Expanding the LA Justice Fund to include all immigrants, regardless of background, is a necessary and important step for racial justice in LA. Excluding those with criminal records from representation only serves to further marginalize the most overpoliced members of our community. Also, the current criminal exclusions actually increase the program's administrative costs and overhead. A person's criminal history is not immediately apparent, and often requires extensive research, including consultation with courthouses and public defenders, collecting and reviewing records (sometimes from multiple jurisdictions) which individuals often do not have, and conducting legal research to determine whether the conviction falls within a prohibited category. In the Los Angeles Justice Fund pilot program, 1,300 screenings were conducted for applicants ultimately deemed ineligible, with at least one provider estimating that their attorneys spent up to 25% to 30% of their time on screening for criminal history during the pilot program, taking nearly one full day of work for an attorney. This means that legal service providers in the pilot program spent an estimated 9,100 hours conducting screenings for ineligible applicants. That is 9,100 hours that could have been spent on representation. It is worth noting, however, that despite the burden of time spent on

determining criminal status, LAJF grantees still served 742 clients, exceeding the goal of 500 cases set in the pilot. Thus, eliminating the criminal carveouts is necessary to make the best use of the City's funding as it would significantly reduce the amount of time and resources spent on screenings as opposed to the critical work of representation and, in fact, allow LAJF to be even more efficient and even more of a success than it already has been. The County of Los Angeles, as well as cities and counties across the country, have already recognized these facts and adopted universal representation programs to protect their immigrant communities, as outlined in this link from the Vera Institute of Justice. It is time for Los Angeles, the city of immigrants, to show strong leadership and do the same. An editorial in La Opinion, from February 16th, supports this step as critical to ensuring justice and due process for all. So, again, I urge you to support the recommendations of the Immigrant Affairs, Civil Rights, and Equity (IACRE) committee, which approved the CLA report's recommendations 1A, 2B, and 3B. That committee voted on 1/20/22 to continue and strengthen the immigrant representation program while eliminating criminal history exclusions, in order to give all Angelenos the fair process they are due. I call on the Budget and Finance committee to not stand in the way of this necessary progress and do the same. Thank you.