



# Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails

# NEWSLETTER

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a committee of  
[Faith in Action East Bay](http://Faith in Action East Bay)  
[www.icjjalamedacounty.org](http://www.icjjalamedacounty.org)

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## Member Congregations

- Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley ~
- First Church Berkeley, UCC ~
- First Unitarian Church, Oakland ~ Interfaith Council of Alameda County ~ Kehilla Community Synagogue, Piedmont ~
- Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland ~
- Lighthouse Mosque, Oakland ~ Montclair Presbyterian Church, Oakland ~ Plymouth United Church of Christ, Oakland ~
- St. Columba Catholic Church, Oakland ~
- Skyline Community Church, United Church of Christ, Oakland ~ Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward

## Who We Are: Mission Statement

The ICJJ seeks to reduce incarceration as a response to social problems in Alameda County, California, and to decrease harmful conditions in the jail. We advocate to decrease the number of those imprisoned and close the revolving door to jail -- especially for those with mental health or housing needs. The jail must be safe, humane, and supportive of successful reentry into our communities.

## Better Medical Care Needed in Santa Rita Jail

The Stop Deaths and Harm in the Jail (SDHJ) group is engaged in an ongoing campaign to pressure both the sheriff and the Board of Supervisors not to renew the county's contract with Wellpath, the current medical provider in Alameda County Jail.

SDHJ sent outreach materials to approximately 400 people throughout the county, asking them to take action with an email to Sheriff Sanchez and one to the Board of Supervisors, urging them not to renew Wellpath's contract and to contract with a not-for-profit medical provider for the jail instead.

Stop Deaths and Harm in the Jail is an offshoot of the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails. We formed in the spring of 2022 to organize a vigil and demonstration outside the Board of Supervisors, lifting up the names of every person who had died in Santa Rita Jail since 2014. SDHJ currently has representatives from Families Advocating for the Seriously Mentally Ill (FASMI), the American Friends



*Santa Rita guards entering Maurice Monk's cell after he was unresponsive.*

Service Committee, Urban Strategies Council, and other activists.

In recent months, SDHJ has successfully gathered over 50 community activists who spoke at several meetings of the Health and Public Protection committees of the Board of Supervisors, demanding an end to the inadequate care provided by Wellpath at the jail.

Wellpath was facing approximately 1500 active medical malpractice lawsuits when they declared bankruptcy last year. The lawsuits were lumped into a creditor group that will be paid from a fund of about \$15 million, and will share in a minority stake that includes other unpaid creditors. Wellpath's current contract with Alameda County is set to expire in 2027.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

We encourage you to take action as well! For our action page, visit <http://bit.ly/462Mine> to contact the Alameda County Sheriff and the Board of Supervisors. Visit <http://bit.ly/3USL4FX> to view a powerful video of recent public comments at the Board of Supervisors, including moving testimony from Maurice Monk's sister about her brother's horrific and unnecessary death in Alameda County Jail. •

**If you want to know more about our group, or would like to be on our email list for campaign updates and invitations to act, please contact Micky Duxbury at [mickydux612@gmail.com](mailto:mickydux612@gmail.com).**

**Friendsgiving 2025: Support Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and All Of Us Or None!**

by Uma Nagarajan-Swenson (LSPC)

Friendsgiving brings folks to the table to celebrate community, break bread together, and write individual holiday cards to hundreds of incarcerated individuals throughout California and across the nation.

Friendsgiving is an annual event hosted by All of Us or None (AOUON), a grassroots organization fighting for the full rights of formerly and currently incarcerated people and their families. AOUON is a project of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC).

This gathering, held each November, is a deeply valued tradition rooted in community, healing, and solidarity. During a season that carries painful reminders of separation for many in our community, directly impacted individuals, family members, LSPC alumni, and allies will gather on Friday, November 21st, at the Freedom & Movement Center in Oakland to forge a joyful and intentional Thanksgiving alternative.

Critical to Friendsgiving is the practice of collective card-writing to incarcerated individuals. By writing personalized, handwritten letters to each inside member of AOUON, we sustain a ritual of community and reflection that uplifts the experiences of incarcerated people as the reason we do this work.



*Volunteers handwrite holiday cards for incarcerated folks during the Friendsgiving gathering in 2023.*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Your participation in this process, whether at the event or from home, is deeply appreciated and makes a real impact on our loved ones and folks inside. Reach out to Angela Kray at [angelakraysf@gmail.com](mailto:angelakraysf@gmail.com) to request a card-writing kit for your congregation or community group.

Other questions or comments? Reach out to [gillian@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:gillian@prisonerswithchildren.org) using the email subject "LSPC Friendsgiving".

Mark your calendars for Friendsgiving on November 21st, 2025, at the Freedom & Movement Center, 4400 Market Street, Oakland, CA 94608! For more details, visit [prisonerswithchildren.org](http://prisonerswithchildren.org). •



# Programs in the Jails

## Applying the Ceasefire Strategy in Santa Rita Jail

by Pastor Jim Hopkins

There are three main categories of violence reduction strategies: prevention, intervention, and community change. Oakland Ceasefire is an intervention strategy. With the goals of reducing the number of shootings and homicides, reducing recidivism, and improving community-police relations, it seeks to intervene meaningfully in the lives of the “drivers and drawers” of gun violence. One of the main objectives is to connect those most likely to resort to gun violence, or be the target of the same, with trained life coaches who can help them to live both freely and safely.

Direct communication with those at the very highest risk for gun violence is a core Ceasefire strategy. To be helpful, these communications must be with the right people and done in the right way. These communications must be honest, authentic, and credible. They occur via group meetings titled call-ins and via custom notifications which occur both in the community, usually at the home of the person at risk, and in Santa Rita Jail.



Custom notifications are a quick tactical tool used to manage near-term spikes in violence (often conflicts between groups), interrupt retaliatory shooting, and communicate with groups and individuals offering them services. The small community-based teams that make the custom notifications consist of a law enforcement officer, a representative of Oakland’s Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), and a community member (frequently a member of the clergy).

At an in-community custom notification, the law enforcement officer makes first contact with the person being notified, assures them that they are not being arrested, and introduces them to the DVP representative and the community member. The DVP representative then delivers a “risk and opportunity” message, urging the person to accept services and be connected with a DVP life coach. The community representative serves as a witness and

an “accountability partner” with the message that they want to be contacted if the promise of service is found not to be credible.

Ceasefire leaders have learned that it is important and helpful to do custom notifications with persons incarcerated at Santa Rita, but soon to return to the community. There, the team is an Alameda County Probation officer who works out of Santa Rita, an Alameda County Sheriff’s deputy, a DVP representative, and a community representative. The basic message is something like “We understand

that you might be released from custody soon. We know you are looking forward to getting out of here, but suspect that you are also worried about how things are going to go for you when you get back home. We want to help you and those you love to stay alive and free.” Each person is asked by a Sheriff’s Office official if they would like to meet with a member of our group. Some choose not to, but most are willing to connect.

In the course of a year, the goal is to conduct 300 custom notifications, with slightly less than half of these taking place in Santa Rita. Procedural justice, community values, and hope for a better day are all at work in these communications.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write to the Board of Supervisors via <https://bos.alamedacountyca.gov>

Write to the Chief Probation Officer and thank them for their support of this program at [jagrigrsby@acgov.org](mailto:jagrigrsby@acgov.org).

Write Oakland DVP Chief Holly Joshi and thank her at [oaklandDVP@oaklandca.gov](mailto:oaklandDVP@oaklandca.gov).

Join a Ceasefire Nightwalk with Faith in Action East Bay. Visit them at [bit.ly/3Vx8CQK](https://bit.ly/3Vx8CQK). •

## Alameda County Supervisors to Vote on Doubling Campaign Contribution Limits

by Bob Britton

Supervisors David Haubert and Nate Miley are proposing an ordinance amendment to significantly increase the dollar amount candidates can accept for their campaign coffers. The amendment aims to double the current campaign contribution limits for Supervisor elections. The issue will be raised at upcoming Board of Supervisors' meetings. Check their agendas, which are posted a couple of days before their meetings. View their schedule and agendas at [bos.alamedacountyca.gov/broadcast](https://bos.alamedacountyca.gov/broadcast)

Currently, Alameda County has a contribution limit of \$20,000 per person or entity per election cycle, which is already the highest among the other five immediate Bay Area Counties, including Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. Those limits range from \$500 in San Francisco's publicly financed elections to \$5,900 in Marin County.

If their proposal passes, the amount Supervisorial candidates would be able to accept would double to \$40,000 from each person or entity for each election cycle, with primary and runoff elections considered separate cycles. The limit for county-wide elective offices would increase from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

The supervisors also propose to eliminate the current prohibition on multiple campaign committees for each candidate.

In 2010, Supervisor Haubert's District 1 predecessor, Scott Haggerty, successfully passed the current county contribution limits just before the state passed limits of \$5,600 (adjustable to inflation) for all counties that did not have their own contribution limits.

In Orwellian language, he claimed it was "to create an equal playing field," but it put the limit at 3.5 times the state statute. Haubert and Miley's current proposal would set the limit at 7.7 times the current state statute. Independent campaign committees are already not governed by these limits.



ICJJ opposes this egregious increase in campaign contribution limits. It greatly exceeds the limits in neighboring counties. We should be lowering the contribution limits to truly create an equal playing field.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Our vote is sacred, and it should not be diluted by those who can give tens of thousands of dollars to any one candidate in our county elections. If you would like to influence the Board of Supervisors' vote on this important issue, email your comments to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at [CBS@acgov.org](mailto:CBS@acgov.org). Include your name and address and ask that your comments be forwarded to all five supervisors. All five supervisors will vote on this issue, so do not limit your message to your own district Supervisor. A simple message is best, such as:

*Dear Alameda County Supervisors,  
I oppose any increase to campaign contribution limits in Alameda County elections. The limits are already much higher than those in the surrounding Bay Area counties. My vote is sacred and should not be diluted by anyone who can give tens of thousands of dollars to a candidate. We need to get big money out of politics. Thank you for your attention to this matter.*

**Side Note:** Bob's comments can also be seen in his Letter to the Editor published in the Castro Valley Forum newspaper. Visit <https://bit.ly/3K7Xpne>. •

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## Measure W Funds Released by Board of Supervisors

Measure W, passed narrowly by Alameda County voters in 2020, raised our sales tax from 9.25% to 9.50% for ten years. The use of proceeds, while not legally restricted, was expected to address the needs of our unhoused population.

The funds were collected and held in escrow pending resolution of a lawsuit against the measure. The lawsuit was resolved in the County's favor, and the Board of Supervisors voted in July to allocate anticipated funds - at least \$1.8 billion over 10 years ending in 2031 - as follows:

- \$170 million Reserve to cover ongoing programs in case of an unexpected drop in revenue.
- 80% of the remainder, or about \$1.3 billion, to a Home Together Fund for homelessness prevention, shelter expansion, supportive housing, rental subsidies, intake system improvement, etc.
- 20%, or about \$330 million, to an Essential Services Fund supporting food security, senior



*Mayor Barbara Lee joined the public to encourage the Board of Supervisors to release Measure W funds.*

care, behavioral health, immigrant and LGBTQ+ services, and other safety-net programs.

ICJJ especially cares about Measure W funding as it will potentially make housing and support services available to system-impacted people, ensuring their stability and reducing their chances of returning to jail or prison. •

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## Update on Alameda Co's Care First, Jails Last (CFJL) Initiative

### 1. Notes from the Mental Health Advisory Board CFJL Ad Hoc Committee

by Myrna Schwartz

Some history: In August 2024, the CFJL Task Force delivered its final report to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors (BOS), outlining policy and program recommendations affecting county agencies, Courts, and law enforcement. BOS approved the report's 58 recommendations and tasked the county's Mental Health Advisory Board (MHAB) with overseeing their implementation.

In response, the MHAB formed an Ad Hoc Committee, composed of MHAB members and representatives of community and advocacy groups (including ICJJ). Committee members meet with designated agency staff to identify progress and barriers to implementation.

In May, at a joint meeting of BOS's Health and Public Protection Committees, the MHAB Ad Hoc updated Supervisors Marquez, Tam, and Miley on a subset of recommendations, including specific asks for BOS intervention to address identified implementation obstacles. To our disappointment, the Supervisors delayed immediate action, opting for further input from invited agency staff at an October Joint Committee hearing.

### 2. Notes from the Care First Community Coalition (CFCC)

by Willem VandeKamp

CFCC is the community arm of the Care First movement, committed to ending the County's reliance on incarcerating people with mental illness and building out community-based mental health care. We work inside and outside official channels to

advance policy and funding goals important to our members.

For the MHAB Committee's BOS presentation in May (see above), CFCC mobilized public support behind calls for BOS action, particularly in the areas of housing, diversion, and gathering data on the effects and results of the implementation of the CFJL recommendations.

In July, CFCC celebrated a big win in the Measure W debate, thanks to the coordinated response of ICJJ and other member groups (see previous Newsletter article).

Priority-setting for the Fall is now underway.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Stay tuned for coming updates and action alerts! To join ICJJ's mailing list, send your name and email to [rspeiglman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rspeiglman@sbcglobal.net). CFCC will continue to advocate with the Board of Supervisors and various county agencies to put the Measure W funds to work for reducing homelessness and invest in necessary housing and supports. •

