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March 9, 2021

To the Esteemed Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for your continued service in these challenging times.

We write to you to express our strong support for the *Expanding Los Angeles County's Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial-Community Based Restoration Program* March 9, 2021 motion by Supervisors Hahn and Solis (moved to March 23<sup>rd</sup> agenda); and to call for an immediate expansion of ODR programs.

LARRP is the largest countywide network of reentry-focused non-profit organizations, public agencies, and advocates that work to ensure that our reentry system meets the needs of our agencies, communities, and the people we serve, both in terms of capacity and public policy. We represent stakeholders across the whole of Los Angeles County. We join with dozens of organizations serving and advocating for formerly and currently incarcerated people to support additional funds being directed to the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR).

Over the past several years, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has shown remarkable leadership in creating a system that dispenses fair justice and moves us away from a punitive criminal justice system to one based on a 'care first, jail last' philosophy. With the creation of ODR, the BOS has reshaped the manner in which the County provides services to people directly impacted by the criminal justice system. For the first time there is a "justice lane" of direct services for our reentry populations, which has allowed us to expand and professionalize services in community-based settings, reducing reliance on incarceration, reinvesting those valuable and limited resources in the community. ODR has improved contracting systems, streamlined data systems, hired and trained a cadre of culturally competent justice focused staff, and demonstrating what a care first/jail last approach looks like every day. The wisdom the BOS has shown in creating ODR has allowed community based providers to contribute their resources within the County framework that had long been prohibitive and bogged down with bureaucracy.

LARRP has served as a strong partner to the BOS and the County departments as we've worked collaboratively and vigorously to implement new reforms even as we fought for them. With the passage of AB109 launching LARRP in 2011, our Executive Director, Troy F. Vaughn, served as the only CBO Representative to the PSRT until the recent vote to include other members from the community. LARRP worked with the Board office around the establishment of ODR, and our Executive

Director has served faithfully on the Permanent Steering Committee that governs that work as an appointee for Supervisorial District 2. From implementing Prop 36 Three Strikes Reform, to Prop 47 expungement clinics, the ATI, and the current work to close MCJ, LARRP has tried to bring the voices and expertise of services providers and impacted people to the table to help build a durable decarceration system of care.

Few challenges in mental health are more serious or complex than the IST population. The Misdemeanant and Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial (MIST/FIST) population represent the very definition of the phrase “the criminalization of the mentally ill.” Our county has addressed this dilemma for our FIST/MIST population in the county jail and state hospital system with astounding success through innovative streamlining with the Office of Diversion and Reentry programming. Since July 2018, ODR’s FIST program has restored 323 individuals while in the jail, thereby avoiding state hospital placements, and another 226 are currently being restored in the community on active court orders. ODR has successfully managed both programs, and we applaud their effort and success.

We have seen functional progress toward helping to bring this population’s numbers down as various diversion programs have come online. In fact, the recent audit for the program across our providers has shown significant positive impact toward recidivism. For the last 5 years, this network has been under development, and we would like to see its continued growth and investment to further improve its effectiveness. Not accepting these funds to expand the program or shifting contracts away from ODR, would set us back another 5 years with the amount of work that would need to be redone, simply to return to where we are now. The County Departments of Health Services and Mental Health both operate in this space, and ODR works uniquely between them to ensure that the IST population is cared for properly.

The governor’s budget lays out a plan and infrastructure to “demonstrate the effectiveness of streamlining services to drive improved outcomes,” by moving to community-based local solutions over statewide programs that have been unable to make headway in bringing down the backlog of IST individuals. We urge you to take the available resources and use them to continue to support proven strategies to aid this population under ODR. In addition, we request the full restoration of decommissioned MIST beds, in order to ensure the continuation of care that has been restricted as of late.

The Alternative to Incarceration (ATI’s) plan to build CBO capacity has been the missing link, and we have a responsibility to work with the most disenfranchised populations, and to ensure that the criminal justice system and other systems that impact the FIST/MIST population, do not cause a lifetime of harm. We are calling for an immediate expansion of ODR programs (MIST, FIST, DSH, ODR Housing) so we can build out this vital community bed capacity and meet the metrics of the ATI, Measure R, and the MCJ Closure work. If the state is working to entrust

communities and counties to develop IST-related infrastructure, we have the opportunity to work on data-driven, human-based solutions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at [troyvaughn@lareentry.org](mailto:troyvaughn@lareentry.org), or LARRP's Policy Coordinator, Charles Vignola, at [Charles@lareentry.org](mailto:Charles@lareentry.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Troy Vaughn', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Troy Vaughn**  
**Co-Founder & Executive Director**  
**Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership**