

Keith Carson
Alameda County Supervisor for District 5, President
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612 Map

Dear Supervisor Carson,

I am a resident and active citizen in District 5. I am writing to express grave concerns about the lack of staffing, care and resources for people incarcerated at Santa Rita Jail, especially during this isolating time of the Pandemic.

A member of our church community is currently incarcerated at Santa Rita, and I am troubled knowing that this friend and person of faith has been isolated in his cell for an excessive amount of time. Apparently he is being let out of his cell for only 30 minutes, once or twice a week. Worse, he has not been allowed to go outside. Jail staff have not taken any actions to lessen this isolation, or to provide any mental health care services for our friend or other inmates. This prolonged isolation only serves to increase the anguish, anxiety and mental health risks already triggered by Covid-19.

Our friend is created in God's image just as you and I are. On this Palm Sunday we gather to celebrate the beloved community embodied by Jesus for all people. I write to encourage you to address three critical issues:

1. Reduce or eliminate the required 10-day isolation period upon entering the facility, particularly for those experiencing mental illness.
2. Address lack of staffing, which is the main reason people are kept in their cells for cruel and unreasonable periods of time.
3. Address the lack of availability of trained mental health support services during incarceration. Therapy can help alleviate unnecessary suffering.

Thank you for considering my three requests for action, and for representing all citizens of District 5, including those who are incarcerated.

Happy Palm Sunday! Thank you for your service to the common good.

Your Name