

February 23, 2017

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
**San Francisco City Hall,**  
**1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place, Room 244**  
**San Francisco, CA 94102**

**Re: Fully Fund the Public Defender's Deportation Defense Unit**

Dear Supervisors Cohen, Tang and Yee,

I write to urge you to fully fund the deportation defense unit of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office.

President Trump has stated his intentions to deport up to 3 million immigrants, and as his executive orders have shown, he will be acting on his plan regarding immigration. If even a fraction of his plan is realized, the legal defense response must be efficient and organized. The Public Defender's Office's infrastructure of lawyers, law clerks, social workers, mental health specialists, investigators, and workspace will be critical in quickly providing detained San Franciscans with the high quality legal representation they will need. The office represents more than 20,000 people each year and has unrivaled expertise in working with individuals in detention, including those in civil immigration detention. In addition to criminal defense, the office has also worked in civil law, including its current representation of clients in mental health conservatorship hearings.

Like New York City, the only other place in the nation with a public defender type system for the detained in immigration courts, San Francisco should also take steps to assure that immigrant detainees have access to counsel and due process. The public defender's involvement institutionalizes detention representation for immigrants most in need and will be a great benefit for all San Franciscans in the long-term. Its attorneys specialize in the intersection of criminal and immigration law, one of the most complicated areas of law where access to criminal specialization is paramount. The office's very existence is based on the concept of accepting all cases, no matter how complex.

Finally, the public defender can minimize expenses by handling multiple cases at once, handling more cases per attorney, and attracting seasoned hires with the experience and capacity to handle complex cases immediately.

I fully support the proposal to fund the San Francisco Public Defender's Office to provide detained removal defense to non-citizens facing deportation.

Sincerely,

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliation, if any:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact information:** \_\_\_\_\_