

June 11, 2026

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

Dear Supervisors,

I write on behalf of the Vera Institute of Justice to urge you to deny San Francisco Adult Probation's budget request that would eliminate the San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project (SF Pretrial), and to approve SF Pretrial's contract. Vera is a national criminal justice research and policy organization that has worked to safely reform pretrial justice systems across the country for more than 60 years. Time and again, our experience has been that well-crafted pretrial programs and policies have a broad, positive impact on communities. They [improve case outcomes](#), [reduce spending](#), and [make communities safer](#), all at the same time. **SF Pretrial is one of the most effective pretrial programs in the country, and Vera regularly cites it as a top example of well-crafted pretrial policy that other jurisdictions should emulate.**

In a recent [publication](#) where Vera documented best practices in pretrial services, SF Pretrial was the first of just four programs that we chose to highlight. This is because SF Pretrial achieves a remarkable [93 percent safety rate and 96 percent court appearance rate](#) by creating customized treatment plans for each person they serve. Based on results of individual needs assessments, SF Pretrial provides a wide range of supports to ensure pretrial success, including case management, on-demand temporary housing, referrals to longer-term stable housing, and connections to health care resources. Vera considers this supportive, wraparound approach to be the gold standard in pretrial services.

Further, Vera has found that pretrial services are most effective when delivered by a separate agency, like SF Pretrial, that operates independently from the courts or probation. As an independent agency, SF Pretrial hires people who are specially trained in supportive case management and counseling. These professionals are best positioned to determine what specific support and supervision a person needs to return to court as required and avoid rearrest. Probation departments, on the other hand, are not designed to make clinical assessments or provide supportive services to the pretrial population; rather, they are designed to supervise people who have been sentenced by the court and have received probation as a

criminal penalty. Vera regularly advises jurisdictions to move away from probation-based pretrial services towards an independent agency model. Dismantling SF Pretrial in favor of probation-based pretrial services would be a significant step backward.

San Francisco has long been—and can continue to be—a national leader in delivering safety, justice, and accountability through successful pretrial services. We urge you not to dismantle one of the most successful pretrial programs in the country. Please act to preserve SF Pretrial by approving their contract and denying Adult Probation's budget request.

Thank you,

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