



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31614, Version: 2

CITY OF SEATTLE
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION endorsing a vision for The City of Seattle to become a city with zero use of detention for youth, and establishing a path forward to develop policies that eliminate the need for youth detention.

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle has developed a Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) to implement its longstanding commitments to social justice and ending racism; and

WHEREAS, Seattle's Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) works to advance civil rights and end barriers to equity, and leads the RSJI; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the RSJI is to end institutional racism within City government, working towards a vision where racial disparities will be eliminated and racial equity achieved; and

WHEREAS, institutional racism is present when organizational programs or policies create inequity along racial lines; and

WHEREAS, confronting institutional racism is a fundamental step towards addressing racial disparities in criminal justice, education, housing, and health indicators, among others; and

WHEREAS, Seattle's history of racism and the current impact of institutional racism and structural racism combine to restrict opportunities for people of color; and

WHEREAS, on April 3, 2014, Mayor Ed Murray issued Executive Order 2014-02, reaffirming the RSJI and directing SOCR to prioritize racial equity work in criminal justice, education, and equitable development, identified by community members as their top three priorities; and

WHEREAS, race and social equity is one of the four core values of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and these

core values are intended to guide decision making in City government; and

WHEREAS the City Council approved funding in the SOCR 2013/2014 and 2015/2016 budgets to build capacity in the community to address structural racism, and the funding has supported technical assistance in anti-racism training, organizational assessment, and implementation of anti-racism strategies; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, King County Executive, and Presiding Judge of King County Superior Court signed a statement of shared commitment on October 13, 2014 to conduct a race and social justice assessment of the King County Children and Family Justice Center that the County will use to develop an action plan; and

WHEREAS, SOCR, in partnership with King County and community stakeholders, conducted a Racial Equity Analysis of the King County Children and Family Justice Center and published a report on June 23, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the racial equity analysis included a finding that the juvenile justice system has a disproportionate negative impact on youth from communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the racial equity analysis recommended designing all aspects of a new Children and Family Justice Center to support a goal of zero use of detention; and

WHEREAS, the communities organizing and leading the campaign against placing youth in detention oppose the construction of the King County Children and Family Justice Center and contend that the facility itself is inconsistent with the vision of zero use of detention for youth;

WHEREAS, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) subsection 13.40.020(10) defines a detention facility as “a county facility,...for the physical confinement of a juvenile alleged to have committed an offense or an adjudicated offender subject to a disposition or modification order” and “includes county group homes, inpatient substance abuse programs, juvenile basic training camps, and electronic monitoring,” and

section 13.04.116 provides that juveniles shall not be held in jails for adults, except as specified; and WHEREAS, in King County's Race and Social Justice Assessment and Action Plan published on March 31, 2015, King County stated an intention to "fight for a world where detention for young people is no longer needed"; and

WHEREAS, in King County's Race and Social Justice Assessment and Action Plan, it also stated that "when we identify opportunities to take immediate action that will prevent even one youth of color from going to detention when an alternative would be better, we commit to taking immediate action on those items"; and WHEREAS, in King County's Race and Social Justice Assessment and Action Plan, it also acknowledged that, while "the use of secure detention for youth has been reduced by nearly three-fourths", the number of African-American youth in detention has risen "from roughly 35 percent of the average daily population fifteen years ago to around 50 percent today - nearly five times their representation in the general youth population of King County"; and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington State Budget and Policy Center, African-American children in Washington are detained at a rate four times higher than the average for the general youth population in the state; and

WHEREAS, according to King County juvenile detention data, two-thirds of all individuals booked in 2012 were youth of color; and

WHEREAS, research published in 2007 by The Sentencing Project, a national non-profit organization researching and advocating on criminal justice policy issues, found Washington State to have a higher disparity between the rates of incarceration of African-Americans and whites than every single Southern state; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice's investigation of the Seattle Police Department has raised serious concerns about biased policing; and

WHEREAS, approximately 26.5 percent of youth bookings in King County come from the Seattle Police

Department; and

WHEREAS, between 21 and 24 percent of youth incarcerated in the County are incarcerated for probation violations; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington ranks first in the United States for jailing youth for status offenses; and

WHEREAS, status offenses, such as truancy and running away from home, accounted for nearly 200 of the youth incarcerated in King County in 2013; and

WHEREAS, according to the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee in its policy brief on At-Risk and Delinquent Girls in the Juvenile Justice System published in March 2009, nine out of ten incarcerated girls had experienced one or more forms of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse before entering the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, according to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Authority in the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, in 2006, two-thirds of Washington state's jailed youth needed help with drug or alcohol dependence and three out of five had mental health issues, and in 2008 one-third of the youth had been in foster care, all of which indicates a need for comprehensive services for incarcerated and at-risk youth; and

WHEREAS, according to research conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Joseph Doyle, 40 percent of youth who went into juvenile detention ended up in prison by the age of 25, and they are more likely than those never detained to drop out of high school; and

WHEREAS, in Washington the economic cost has been calculated at an estimated \$95,805 for every year that a youth is incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), the costs of community-based alternatives are lower than the costs of youth detentions, and community-based alternatives have lower rates of recidivism; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has investigated Seattle Public Schools for disciplining African Americans “more frequently and more harshly than similarly situated white students”; and

WHEREAS, African American students are suspended from Seattle Public Schools more than three times as often as white students from elementary schools to high schools; and

WHEREAS, the "school-to-prison pipeline" refers to the policies and practices, such as punitive disciplinary policies, that push schoolchildren, especially children of color, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of juvenile incarceration on communities of color undermine the City’s work to end institutional racism in City government and interfere with the City’s goal of achieving racial equity across the community; and

WHEREAS, a vision for zero use of detention has long been the vision of Seattle youth of color, particularly African-American youth, who have been organizing and leading a campaign against placing youth in detention; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The City Council endorses the vision for Seattle to become a city with zero use of detention for juveniles, as recommended by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) in the Racial Equity Analysis of the King County Children and Family Justice Center.

Section 2. The City Council will pursue policies that lead to the racial equity outcomes highlighted in the SOCR analysis, which include:

A. Eliminating the need to detain or incarcerate youth.

B. Eliminating racial inequities in arrest rates, detention, sentencing and prison population.

C. Centering communities of color and other youth facing oppression in the provision, creation, and use of community-based alternatives to secure confinement.

Section 3. The City Council recognizes and appreciates the new countywide steering committee formed

by the King County Executive, the King County Council, and King County Superior Court to work to end racial disparity in the juvenile justice system. The City Council endorses the aims of the committee, which include:

- A. Establishing short- and long-term actions to help end racial disproportionality in King County's juvenile justice system.
- B. Defining metrics and creating partnerships to improve the juvenile justice system.
- C. Identifying root causes of racial disproportionality and specific solutions needed to address them in individual communities.
- D. Engaging communities by sharing information, then collecting and incorporating feedback.

Section 4. The City Council invites King County to partner with the City in adopting the vision of zero use of detention for juveniles. The City Council requests that Seattle Public Schools endorses this same vision, and enacts policies and practices to end disparities in discipline, eliminate long-term out-of-class suspensions, and cut off the school-to-prison pipeline.

Section 5. The City Council requests that the City's Criminal Justice Equity Team do the following, while working in partnership as much as possible with the countywide steering committee and its staff:

- A. Develop an action plan by September 2016 for the City to work toward zero use of youth detention.

The Action Plan should include, but not be limited to:

- 1. Concrete steps that City departments and programs can take to reduce reliance on detention;
- 2. A strategy for City investment in anti-racist, community-centered alternatives to detention that are led by communities of color, including, but not limited to, conflict resolution and restorative justice;
- 3. A plan for partnership with and investments in communities most negatively impacted by racism during strategy development and implementation; and
- 4. A plan for monitoring and evaluating the progress toward City goals, including a proposal for accountability to communities most negatively impacted by racism.

B. The City Council requests that SOCR, as co-lead of the City's Criminal Justice Equity Team, develop a report by January 1, 2016 that outlines a strategy for engaging City departments including law enforcement, community members, anti-racist community-based agencies, and partner agencies in the development of the City's Action Plan.

C. The City Council intends to allocate City resources to this effort, including but not limited to: providing permanent staffing for the Criminal Justice Equity Team, funding for consulting contracts to enable equitable community partnership, and funding for evaluation of progress toward the zero-detention vision.

Section 6. The City Council intends to allocate City resources for alternatives to detention and incarceration for youth that are community-based and community-led, with clearly defined program outcomes, consistent with Resolution 31425. The City Council intends to allocate funds in a manner that focuses on and includes participation from anti-racist community-based agencies and African-American youth - so that those who are most disproportionately arrested, detained, and incarcerated are able to determine their own circumstances and be engaged in developing a different path forward for their communities.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2015, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2015.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2015.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)