



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

April 22, 2024

Mayor Todd Gloria
City Administration Building
202 C Street, 11th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Urgent: Concerns Regarding Proposed City Budget and Equity

Dear Mayor Gloria,

As a fellow colleague and representative of overlapping neighborhoods within our city, I am compelled to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed city budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Our most important charge is ensuring that every decision we make reflects a commitment to equity and fairness for the residents we serve, and that shared responsibility to our constituents weighs heavily on my mind as I review the current budget proposal.

I cannot remain silent in the face of a budget proposal that fails to adequately reflect a commitment to equity and fairness for all residents. While I understand the challenges of balancing budget deficits, we cannot allow financial constraints to serve as an excuse for neglecting the needs of our marginalized populations and historically underserved neighborhoods. Equity should not be sacrificed at the altar of fiscal responsibility, particularly after the recent disastrous floods and their impacts on the people we serve.

It is imperative that we prioritize investments in programs and services that address the systemic inequalities that persist in our city and provide critical resources for residents simply trying to thrive in one of the most expensive cities in the nation. This means allocating resources to the following programs that you propose to cut:

- No Shots Fired, the gang violence intervention and prevention program that led to a 65% decrease in gang homicides and has undoubtedly contributed to the safety of our region,

- Cannabis equity program for those unjustly criminalized during the war on drugs era. This program has the potential to increase the city's revenue, and if eliminated, the city would have to return almost \$900,000 to the state,
- SD Access for All funding, which has created internet access for those most impacted by the digital divide and increases internet access for all people,
- Youth Drop-In Centers, which was unanimously supported by Council and would provide a safe place for our young people to go for critical resources in their own communities,
- San Diego Housing Commission's budget at a time when we face mounting issues in homelessness and housing affordability, and
- Climate and Community Equity Funds, which are specifically designed to meet the resource needs of our underserved communities in the areas of climate and economic justice.

If we don't effectively represent the best interest of our communities in these things, we are jeopardizing the trust in us and perpetuating the historical disinvestment realities of our most vulnerable constituents.

As elected representatives, we have a duty to uplift the voices of those who have been historically marginalized and ensure their inclusion in the decision-making process. Anything less would be a betrayal of the trust placed in us by our constituents.

I urge you to carefully reconsider the priorities outlined in the current proposed budget and work with the City Council and the Community to develop a plan that reflects our shared values of equity, fairness, and justice. Our city's future depends on it.

Sincerely,



Monica Montgomery Steppe
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
District Four

CC: Eric Dargan, Chief Operating Officer
Council President Sean Elo-Rivera
Council President pro Tem Joe LaCava
Councilmember Jen Campbell
Councilmember Stephen Whitburn
Councilmember Henry Foster III
Councilmember Marni von Wilpert
Councilmember Kent Lee
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