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SUPERVISOR WILMA CHAN TO COMMIT \$250,000 TO HELP REDUCE AND PREVENT POLICE / RESIDENT CONFRONTATIONS

“Know-Your-Rights” Program Will Serve 5,000 Oakland Area Students

Oakland, CA – Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan today presented \$250,000 from her office budget to help fund a program aimed at reducing altercations between youth and the police. The funds will help 5,000 students better understand their Constitutional rights so they can avoid confrontations with police, stay out of the criminal justice system, and protect themselves from harm.

“Relations between law enforcement and community youth nationwide have deteriorated,” said Supervisor Wilma Chan. “I made this contribution to help prevent routine police encounters from spinning out of control. Youth who know their rights and how to assert them will help make our communities safer for everyone.”

Supervisor Chan’s contribution will support the *Learn Your Rights In California* (LYRIC) program, sponsored by the Office of the Alameda County Public Defender. LYRIC empowers and protects youth in their interactions with police by teaching them their Constitutional rights and examining through role play the following questions:

- What happens if a police officer wants to talk to me?
- What happens if I am arrested?
- What happens if a police officer wants to search me?

Supervisor Chan’s \$250,000 contribution will fund:

- Three LYRIC fellows to help attorneys teach at least 250 students per month;
- A summer internship program for students, with \$500 stipends;
- A mobile app that will enable youth to document police interactions;
- A video that encourages schools to sign up for LYRIC training;
- LYRIC promotional materials, including t-shirts and posters; and
- A refresher course that tackles new issues and addresses follow-up questions.

Americans continue to witness repeated incidents of questionable use of force at the hands of police, often with tragic results. Evidence suggests that many of these incidents could have been avoided if residents had a better understanding of their rights, how to interact with police, and how to effectively de-escalate conflict.

“LYRIC is one of the most important programs that our office has undertaken,” remarked Alameda County Public Defender Brendon Woods. “Teaching our youth how to safely assert their constitutional rights when they come into contact with law enforcement is absolutely critical in today’s climate and will hopefully prevent more youth from entering the criminal justice system.”

The program has gained traction in high schools throughout the Oakland and San Leandro Unified School Districts. The Alameda County Public Defender’s Office debuted the LYRIC program in March 2014. Since its inception, the program has taught approximately 2,000 high school students in the Oakland and San Leandro Unified School Districts.

“We’re working to prepare all OUSD students for college, career, and community success,” said Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Antwan Wilson. “Ensuring that our students have an understanding of the law and their rights as Americans is part of that process and plays a critical role in helping them grow into mature, productive, and self-sufficient adults. Initiatives like LYRIC are a powerful means of conveying important life lessons that help our students negotiate and thrive in society.”

A student from Oakland Technical High School recently remarked that, “The lesson is relevant to me and my peers. Some of us actually do get stopped by police for stuff, even if we didn’t do anything.”

Coach Eric Clayton at Oakland Technical High School also praised the Public Defender’s work, noting that “Your office is doing a wonderful job in educating our youth and in turn, protecting our police officers and community.”

Earlier this year, the Public Defender’s Office received an award from the National Association of Counties in recognition of the program’s work to enhance public safety. [Click here to watch a 30-second video about the LYRIC program.](#)

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About Supervisor Wilma Chan

Alameda County Supervisor Chan represents District 3, which includes the cities of Alameda, San Leandro, parts of Oakland including Chinatown, Jack London, Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods, and the unincorporated community of San Lorenzo. She is currently Vice President of the Board of Supervisors, Chair of the Health Committee, and a member of the County’s Personnel, Administrative, and Legislative Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Unincorporated Services Committee. For more on Supervisor Chan’s accomplishments and current initiatives, please visit www.acgov.gov/board/district3 or connect on Facebook with “[Supervisor Wilma Chan](#).”