

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County of Alameda Committed to Partnerships to Support Foster Youth

On June 22, 2023, the City of Hayward filed a lawsuit against the County of Alameda. While the County does not comment on active litigation matters, and does not comment on the specific allegations in the lawsuit, the County does want to address generally the concerns raised in the Mayor's May 26, 2023 letter.

We do not agree with the City's characterization of recent isolated incidents with certain high needs foster youth. The County is fully aware of the ongoing challenges of providing safe spaces for foster youth in our community and throughout the State. We encourage the City to continue the discussions that the County initiated after it received the Mayor's letter. It is unfortunate that the City chose to file suit less than a month later rather than continuing the collaborative efforts that were in process.

Child welfare services are built on the principle of harm reduction. Human trafficking is a national issue. Throughout California, all counties are working diligently to address the issue of sexual exploitation of our foster youth population. This County partnered with West Coast Children's Clinic, a nationally recognized agency for their programs in assessing foster children in their first days of entering and living in foster care and providing services targeted to the sexually exploited youth including outreach, engagement, clinical case management, and therapy while youth are at the Assessment Center and for those who run away.

Supporting foster youth is difficult work. Those who staff the Assessment Center shoulder those challenges every day. We are grateful to every agency and non-profit that works at the Assessment Center including Diligence Security Group, MISSSEY, Inc. (Motivating, Inspiring, Serving and Supporting Sexually Exploited Youth, Inc.), and County employees from the Social Services Agency and the Public Health Department.

In locations across the County, resources belonging to cities, the County, and local non-profits are utilized to support at-risk and foster youth. Hayward is no exception. It takes all of us working together to meet the needs of the foster youth, providing them with emotional support and a place to stabilize and start to heal like the Assessment Center.

We hope to resolve this matter without further litigation so that limited public resources can be spent on serving the youth of our county rather than on attorneys and court proceedings. We look forward to a constructive, long-term relationship and partnership with the City, our non-profits, and our public safety partners.

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