

August 24, 2022

Honorable Erick Larsh, Presiding Judge  
Orange County Grand Jury  
700 Civic Center Drive  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Supervisor Foley's Response to Grand Jury Report Entitled "How is Orange County Addressing Homelessness"

Dear Presiding Judge Larsh:

As a member of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, I'm writing to concur with the Grand Jury's Finding, number three, that the county is not providing consistent, collaborative, efforts with Orange County cities to address homelessness. I want to emphasize that this statement depicts my views and does not reflect the views of the Board or the County—this letter solely reflects my own views.

Grand Jury FINDINGS:

F3. The County of Orange and cities within Orange County have been inconsistent in collaboration for support of shelters and services, which has resulted in missed opportunities to end homelessness.

I agree with this finding. Cities cannot solve homelessness on their own. Homelessness is a regional problem that requires a regional solution. We need a regional strategy that defines specific roles for county and city collaboration. During the Investigative Hearing on Homelessness that Chairman Chaffee and I held, there was a consensus among Mayors from three cities—Santa Ana, Laguna Beach, and Costa Mesa, that the County must do more to

support cities efforts. As a former city councilmember and Mayor, my personal experience is consistent with the views expressed by the Mayors during our hearing.

According to the County's 2020 Performance Audit of Grant Funding for Affordable Housing and Homelessness, there was a consensus among county staff and community stakeholders "that among the 34 cities in the County, there are competing needs, priorities, and political ideologies that hinder collaboration amongst the County and constituent cities." The reality described by this performance audit poses a barrier to the County's ability to compete for homelessness and affordable housing funding, leading to missed opportunities to address the crisis.

My experience as a mayor, and ongoing dialogue with current mayors across the county, reaffirm my belief that we must do more to support city efforts to reduce homelessness-- especially through addressing the financial hurdles cities face that limit project development. In cities that do not receive state and federal funding for homeless-assistance projects, being required to utilize general fund money to combat this crisis creates enormous burdens for well-intended cities that lack the proper resources to implement the good work they aspire to do. The county by contrast receives direct funding for prevention and elimination of homelessness.

I do believe that the County has made progress when it comes to homelessness, but to comprehensively address the crisis we must do more to collaborate with our city partners. As our entire team has worked closely together on reducing homelessness, we absolutely believe that not one person, or one city, can properly mitigate this crisis alone. Strategic, consistent, collaboration is the only way we can properly address homelessness in an effective manner within Orange County.

Sincerely,

Katrina Foley  
Orange County Supervisor, Second District

cc: Frank Kim, Orange County Executive Office

KF: rc