



Superior Court of the State of California

COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
P.O BOX 3488
MODESTO, CALIFORNIA 95353

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ✓

2010 MAR 29 A 11: 54
TELEPHONE
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DONALD E. SHAVER, JUDGE

March 25, 2010

Jeff Grover, Chairman
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

Dear Jeff,

Since our Adult Drug Court first started in 1995, we have had a number of informal understandings as a part of our working relationship with the Sheriff's Office which have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of this program. A series of cutbacks to the Sheriff's budget now threaten some fundamental aspects of that program. These concerns all arise out of the drastic scaling back of the capacity of the Honor Farm.

The Honor Farm hosts a number of highly effective rehabilitation programs for men, including in-custody drug treatment facilities, literacy and GED programs, and occupational training programs. Our drug court utilizes all of these programs for those inmates that have difficulty succeeding in out-patient programs initially. We have had a significant number of Drug Court graduates who got their start in rehab in the in-custody programs.

Due to cutbacks in custodial staff, the Honor Farm will be effectively shut down and these programs curtailed by this summer. Of the approx. 350 beds at the Honor Farm, 270 will be emptied by this summer, and only 86 will remain. This will be done by releasing the 270 "least dangerous" prisoners to the work program as soon as they are sentenced, regardless of the amount of time they were supposed to serve. These valuable rehab programs will no longer be feasible in such an environment. In addition, releasing this number of inmates before they serve any significant penal time and without the services previously available to equip them to avoid reoffense will create the conditions for a "perfect storm" affecting the safety and security of the community and the effectiveness of programs such as Drug Court.

I certainly appreciate that we are facing the most devastating financial crisis since the Great Depression, and our options are severely limited. However, I would urge the Board to do whatever it possibly can to avoid the spiraling effect that the dismantling of these programs will cause. I would be happy to do whatever I can to assist.

Cc: Sheriff Christianson

Sincerely yours,

Donald E. Shaver, Judge