



**League of Women Voters
Alameda County Council**

***Alameda
Berkeley/Albany/Emeryville
Eden Area
Fremont/Newark/UnionCity
Livermore/Amador Valley
Oakland
Piedmont***

February 21, 2005

Keith Carson, President
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear President Carson:

The Alameda County Leagues of Women Voters continue to be concerned about reform of the Juvenile Justice system. The recent incident reporting inappropriate activities of counselors, who encouraged “wrestling matches” among incarcerated youth, strengthens our belief that Juvenile Counselor recruitment qualifications need to be re-examined, along with a serious look into why there was not proper supervision/management of the counseling staff.

The quality of counselors and their related supervision is critical to providing a setting that meets rehabilitative standards for this difficult youth population. The environment of firm discipline must be matched by respect, integrity, and fairness toward all detainees. Accountability and professional development for counselors are absolutely imperative.

We ask the County Board of Supervisors to facilitate a study of youth experiences with their counselors as well as a detailed analysis of requirements for counselor hiring and supervision, the training materials used, the amount of training required, and what evaluation standards the supervisors have for counselor accountability, attitudes, and behaviors. The results could be used to learn if the important duties of counselors are matched by their qualifications, training, expectations for performance, and quality supervision.

We thank you for your continued interest in this important topic. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 510-287-1240.

Sincerely,

Lena L. Tam
Alameda County Council LWV, Chair

Cc: Honorable Alice Lai-Bitker, Board of Supervisors, District 3
Honorable Nate Miley, Board of Supervisors, District 4
Honorable Gail Steele, District 2
Honorable Scott Haggerty, Board of Supervisors, District 1