

# INTERFAITH COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN OUR JAILS (ICJJ) NEWSLETTER

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a committee of [Faith in Action East Bay](#)

Visit our website at

[www.icjjalamedacounty.org](http://www.icjjalamedacounty.org)

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## Member Congregations

Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley ~  
First Church Berkeley, UCC ~  
First Unitarian Church, Oakland ~ Interfaith  
Council of Alameda County ~ Kehilla  
Community Synagogue, Piedmont ~  
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland  
~ Lighthouse Mosque, Oakland ~ Montclair  
Presbyterian Church, Oakland ~ Plymouth  
United Church of Christ, Oakland ~  
St. Columba Catholic Church, Oakland ~  
Skyline Community Church, United Church  
of Christ, Oakland ~ Starr King Unitarian  
Universalist Church, Hayward

## Who We Are:

### Mission Statement

The ICJJ seeks to reduce incarceration as a response to social problems in Alameda County, California, and to decrease harmful conditions in the jail. We advocate to decrease the number of those imprisoned and close the revolving door to jail -- especially for those with mental health or housing needs. The jail must be safe, humane, and supportive of successful reentry into our communities.

## Don't Undermine Proposition 47

In 2014, nearly 60% of Californians voted in favor of Prop 47, which made most drug possession and property crimes under \$950 misdemeanors instead of felonies. Because people of color were most often prosecuted for these non-violent crimes, Prop 47 is widely seen as having reduced racial disparities in our judicial system. It has also helped to reduce the prison and jail populations - a core goal of ICJJ - while directing hundreds of millions of dollars in savings into successful, community-based programs supporting those most likely to engage in crime.

Unfortunately, during the spike in property crime in the last several years, tough-on-crime advocates have called for the modification - or even the reversal - of Prop 47. Conservative shoppers and business owners tend to lump shoplifting and major "smash and grab" thefts together, *but Prop 47 does not affect prosecution of the latter, more serious criminal behavior.*<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, under Prop 47, shoplifting is



a crime punishable by up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000.

Backers of a proposed ballot measure said last month that they had gathered enough signatures to ensure it will be on the November ballot. That measure would make a third conviction for retail theft a felony, regardless of the amount stolen. It would also create a new class of crime called a "treatment-mandated felony" in order to pressure people convicted of possession of hard drugs to seek treatment.<sup>2</sup>

1 Governor Newsom on "[Prop 47 isn't the problem and doesn't need to be touched.](#)"

2 [Description and analysis of the proposed ballot initiative to amend Prop 47](#)

The Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails believes that making it a felony to steal a small amount of merchandise, even for the third time, is more likely to create a life-long criminal than to reduce crime. And trying to coerce drug-users into existing, inadequate drug programs has proven mostly ineffective as well. We need proven, long-term solutions to social problems, not a return to harsher sentences and the stigma of felony convictions.

**Action:** We urge you to refuse to sign petitions calling for the reversal of Prop 47 and to vote NO if it appears on the November ballot.

**Further reading:**

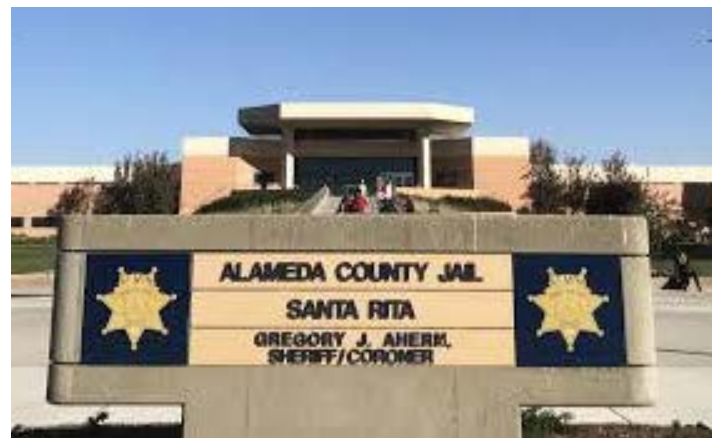
- [KOED: "Proposition 47's Impact on California's Criminal Justice System"](#)
- [Progressive Democrats say services, not penalties, will cut crime](#)
- [Public Policy Institute report on Retail Theft and Robbery](#)

## Stop Deaths and Harm in Alameda County Jail; the Challenge of Wellpath, Alameda County's Jail Health Services Provider

*If you are interested in being part of a group whose goal is to stop deaths and reduce harmful conditions in the jail, contact Micky Duxbury, who facilitates the Stop Deaths and Harms in Alameda County Jail group on behalf of ICJJ: [mickydux612@gmail.com](mailto:mickydux612@gmail.com).*

Past issues of the ICJJ Newsletter have addressed a variety of concerns about jail conditions and resultant harm that people detained at Santa Rita experience. In pursuit of current priorities we continue to dialogue with Sheriff's Office representatives about notification to family members when a death occurs and when an individual is moved to a treatment facility in or outside of the jail. We are beginning to discuss the egregious record of Wellpath, the jail's medical provider. We hope to develop presentations about jail conditions for elected officials throughout the county and keep pressure on the Sheriff to promote transparency through development of a data dashboard for use by the public as well as county officials.

Jail deaths have largely preventable causes, like suicide, medical neglect, drug overdose, and violence. The stories told by formerly incarcerated individuals to their families and advocates reveal that death is merely the visible "tip of the iceberg" of mental trauma and medical harm. There is ample evidence of serious, persistent care deficiencies of the most at-risk individuals at



Santa Rita. Failure in delivery of care may be attributed to how newly booked individuals are assessed for health, mental health, and other problems; how they are housed and treated; how accessible they feel health and mental health services are to them; and how service providers practice medicine and deliver other prevention and treatment services.

Alameda County contracts for medical services with Wellpath (<https://wellpathcare.com>), a corporation with a notorious history and one requiring more oversight than the Sheriff's Office provides. ICJJ works to influence the Sheriff's Office to improve its lax oversight of Wellpath.



**Further reading:**

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/podcasts/article/wellpath-jail-healthcare-18258456.php>

## District Attorney Recall Election Scheduled for November 5

On Tuesday May 14, at a Special Meeting in the Alameda County Board of Supervisors chambers, the Board of Supervisors voted 3 to 0 to schedule the recall vote of District Attorney Pamela Price on the date of the General Election, November 5, 2024. Voting in favor of this date were Elisa Marquez (District 2), Keith Carson (District 5), and Nate Miley (District 4). David Haubert (District 1) and Lena Tam (District 3) were absent.



recall with the General Election. Otherwise, the County Registrar estimated, the cost for organizing a Special Election would be between \$15 million and \$20 million. Supervisor Miley commented that with the County facing a fiscal year 2024-25 budget deficit of at least \$68 million, it would be fiscally imprudent to spend \$20 million on a special election when the general election was already scheduled for November 5. Furthermore, the Registrar made clear, office staffing, printing ballots,

The Board had certified the recall at a prior meeting, when the County Registrar determined there were enough signatures collected by the recall organizers to certify the recall election. The recall campaign, which started shortly after District Attorney Price took office in January 2023, spent more than \$3 million collecting signatures. It was funded largely by real estate investors and hedge fund managers, many of whom previously funded the recall of Chesa Boudin in San Francisco.

and securing additional ballot-counting infrastructure for two separate elections within 2-3 months of each other would create a difficult if not impossible undertaking for the Registrar's Office.

The additional cost of holding a Special Election in August or September was the primary stated reason for the Board's decision to support combining the

Supervisor Carson additionally cited the downside of a special election for voter turnout. This followed an earlier public comment by ICJJ Chair, Richard Speigman: "I believe a consolidation election with the general election in November promotes the greatest opportunity for democracy at this stage. More people will come out and have the opportunity to vote."

## Hear from Candidates for Alameda County Supervisor District 5

Several ICJJ members created a questionnaire for candidates running for District 5 in the Alameda County Supervisor's race. The two candidates whose names will appear on the November runoff ballot are Nikki Bas, Oakland City Council President, and John Bauters, Emeryville City Council member.

We asked challenging questions about the criminal legal system with a focus on seriously mentally ill individuals who all too frequently wind up in Alameda County Jail instead of in community-based treatment. Please use the link below their pictures to the right to see their responses to help guide your decision-making for the November election. We are thankful to both Nikki Bas and John Bauters for in-depth answers to our questions.



ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**District 5**



[Nikki Bas's Responses](#)



[John Bauters's Responses](#)