

MOTION

There are 800,000 youth, ages 10-25, in Los Angeles, and in 2017-2018, the City spent \$60.3 million to provide resources to young people. Youth programs in the City of Los Angeles are spread across 26 departments, and there is no centralized approach, evaluation or commensurate leveraging of federal, state and county resources. Prioritizing youth in Los Angeles with a concentrated and unfettered approach is critical -- 200,000 youth currently live in poverty, 68,000 are disconnected from school and job opportunities, and over 3,000 are homeless.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on young people, especially youth in under-resourced communities. Education has been disrupted, causing youth to fall behind in academic achievement, and the ensuing economic crisis has also set up an uncertain job market for those just entering the workforce.

As violence escalates in the City's most vulnerable communities, now more than ever we must focus on a strategic and comprehensive public safety approach. Investments in youth programs should not survive based on the strength or weakness of a single budget year, but should be commensurate with our investments in law enforcement as part of a comprehensive strategy to achieve greater public safety. The City needs infrastructure focused on leveraging both internal and external resources to ensure equitable investments are made to address the root causes of violence and connect investments to community needs. Our response to the increase in violence must also include investments in peacemakers and trauma-informed care.

In December 2019, Council approved the creation of a Youth Development Task Force to reflect on current program offerings and provide a platform for community members to lend their voice to identify reforms needed to better serve young people. Garnering participation from a diverse cross section of youth, parents, foundations and social service providers, the task force evaluated city department program investments and determined no mechanism exists to assess whether these investments are making an impact, used effectively, and are equitable in meeting the needs of youth.

Young people deserve a government structured and designed to meet their needs informed by their voice, not outdated preservation of unmeasured programs. For 50 years, youth development work has operated as a subsidiary of other initiatives. Intervention strategies should not begin upon entanglements with law enforcement, greater investments in diverse early prevention efforts are desperately needed. Systemic reforms are needed with a singular focus on youth ages 10-25, a population that has been overlooked in strategic investments and programming. The department functions will include, but not be limited to, coordinating with regional agencies and providers of youth services, serving as a one-stop-shop for the public to access youth services, and auditing youth programs to ensure efficient use of City resources to ensure the greatest return on investments. Additionally, as the state divests from jailing young people in the Division of Juvenile Justice, the City needs the structured capacity to receive the investments proportionate to the population need.

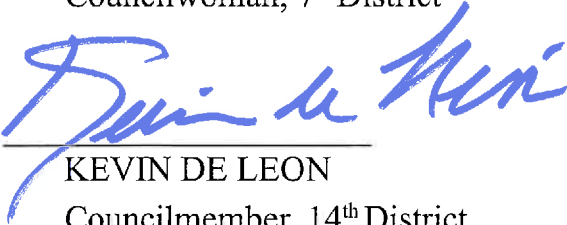
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney be requested to prepare and present an ordinance to create a Youth Development Department.

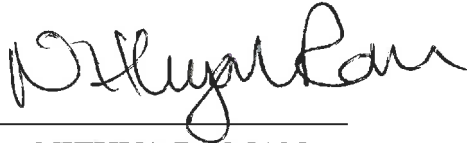
I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), with the assistance of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), in consultation with the Youth Development Task Force, be directed to define the duties, responsibilities, goals and objectives of the Youth Development Department.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CAO be directed to identify funding in the 2021-22 Budget to commence the creation of a Youth Development Department.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA be directed to report back on the steps necessary to place a measure on the 2022 ballot to fund youth programming managed by a dedicated Youth Development Department within 15 days.

PRESENTED BY: 
MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilwoman, 7th District


KEVIN DE LEON
Councilmember, 14th District


NITHYA RAMAN
Councilwoman, 4th District

SECONDED BY: 
MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District