



February 27, 2023

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple Street  
Room 383  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Support –** *Ensuring Reliable Access to Reading Materials for Individuals Incarcerated in LA County Jails.*

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The League of Women Voters of LA County (LWVLAC) writes to support the Motion sponsored by LA County Supervisor Horvath on *Ensuring Reliable Access to Reading Materials for Individuals Incarcerated in LA County Jails*. The Board of Supervisors recognizes the recent efforts of the Sheriff's Department in offering increased access to reading materials initiated during the pandemic. It requests that these services be increased and that an update of efforts be made by the Department to the Board. It recommends increased placement of bookshelves and books in common areas, additional donations, tablets for reading use, and mobile book carts provided to jail cells.

The League of Women Voters of California position on providing library services supports:

1. Increasing recognition of the essential nature of public libraries in a democratic society,
2. Promoting measures to insure the efficiency and economy of library services,
3. Supporting improvement of library facilities to increase accessibility.
4. Supporting long-term, assured, stable and adequate funding for public libraries.

The League recognizes the recent efforts for LA Sheriff's Department in increasing offerings at jail sites and encourages a continuation of the positive trend. This is a fundamental support for jail prisoners that can make true positive change.

The American Correctional Association (ACA) Accreditation Standards offers guidance on libraries in jails and prisons. The Supreme Court decision in *Lewis V. Casey* affirms, "the principle from *Lewis* (formerly *Bounds*) has been extended to jails, although application may be slightly different...the longer an inmate remains in a jail, the more the right of access to the courts." Due to the often-lengthy stays in jails, access to reading materials becomes critical.

Reading and education are often one of the few positive routes for jail prisoners to improve themselves and break the cycle of incarceration. Offering a constructive support for such efforts is an area that the Sheriff's Department can facilitate. It is a way for jail prisoners to change their lives in a prosocial and legal way.

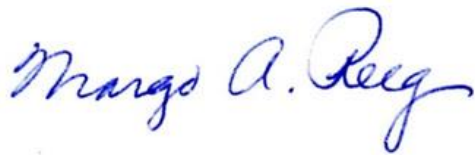
In addition, the State of CA Board of State and Community Corrections has listed Title 15 minimum standards for local detention facilities. In this document, library services are detailed. It states, "The library service shall include access to legal reference materials, current information on community services and resources, and religious, educational, and recreation reading materials

(2019 Regulations Revision, Bd of State and Community Corrections.) Recreational reading is a necessary part of this standard.

The LWVLAC understands that this effort can be difficult and has costs to implement. Donation of books can offset some of these costs. But having a positive support for people in jails is a much better use of funding than re-incarceration. Prison programs have long included recreational and educational reading in their facilities. This is also very important for jails. We applaud the early efforts of the LA County Sheriff's Department and strongly support increasing these endeavors. It makes for a more stable environment and a way for people to improve themselves. We look forward to reading the report provided to the Board of Supervisors about provision of library books in local jails.

It you have additional questions, please contact LA County LWV President Margo Reeg, at 562-947-5818 or [margolwv@gmail.com](mailto:margolwv@gmail.com)

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margo A. Reeg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "M" and "R".

Margo A. Reeg, Co-President  
League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County

Nancy L. Mahr, Co-President

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