

Probation Department Accountability Reform

In order to keep Fresno County safe our Probation Department needs more accountability. Yet the problem is not because of poor performance or management. The problem exists because of an outdated provision of the Fresno County Charter that creates jurisdictional confusion between the responsibilities of Fresno County and the Superior Court.

Our Charter contains an outdated provision at odds with the original intent of Fresno County voters. Charter Section 21 provides for the Probation Chief, an employee of Fresno County, to be appointed by the Superior Court. Back when this section was written in 1933, the Superior Court was for practical purposes part of Fresno County. But that all changed legislatively with the Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 when the State assumed management authority over all Superior Courts in California.

However, the Fresno County Charter was not updated to reflect this significant change; specifically, updating the appointment authority over Fresno County's Probation Chief. It is illogical for a State entity, in this case the Superior Court, to have the authority to hire and fire an employee of Fresno County who oversees an entire Fresno County department. The Probation Chief is responsible for managing hundreds of County employees, yet, by this outdated provision, is being required to simultaneously serve two different masters. Accountability cannot exist under these illogical circumstances.

By voting YES you will restore accountability to the Probation Department. Like all other department heads, the Probation Chief will be appointed by the County Administrative Officer of Fresno County and the Board of Supervisors, but the selection will still be done in consultation with the Superior Court. This change will restore accountability, the Courts will still be consulted and the Charter will reflect the legislative changes mandated by the State.

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COUNTY CLERK
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
ADMINISTRATION

The undersigned proponent(s) or author(s) of the primary argument in favor of a ballot measure to amend the County of Fresno Charter to reform the accountability of the Probation Department at the November 2016 Presidential General election for the County of Fresno to be held on November 8, 2016 hereby state that this argument is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief.


SIGNED

DATE




Sheriff Margaret Mims

8/15/16




Jean M. Rousseau, County Administrative Officer

8/15/16



County Supervisor Buddy Mendes

8/15/16



County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas

8/15/16