CONSENT CALENDAR December 17, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Kriss Worthington, District 7, Berkeley City Council

Subject: Support IGNITE, End the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and Send a Letter to UC

President Janet Napolitano

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution supporting IGNITE (Invest in Graduation Not Incarceration, Transform Education), a campaign aimed at prioritizing California spending on education instead of prisons. Send a letter to the UC President Janet Napolitano asking to support the UCSA (University of California Student Association) by increasing student retention rates through the creation of academic preparation and retention programs.

BACKGROUND

People of color and underrepresented backgrounds face an uphill battle when gaining an education. With the addition of a criminal justice system that adversely affects minorities, California has developed a school-to-prison pipeline, in which students are finding themselves in the criminal justice system. Zero tolerance policies in K-12 education that call for more student suspensions and expulsions have increased the likelihood of these students to drop out of school and enter prisons. Additionally, California's focus on prison spending, instead of education, has resulted in higher tuitions across the UC and CSU systems, subsequently creating an education barrier for lower income students.

UCSA's (University of California Student Association) action committee, IGNITE, has aimed to address these issues through its support of several bills and a constitutional amendment. IGNITE has seen the successful passing of SB 649, a bill seeking to reduce prison population and stop the imprisonment of nonviolent drug offenders, AB 420, a bill to limit suspensions and expulsions, and AB 218, a bill prohibiting state and local agencies from asking an applicant to disclose criminal conviction information until after his or her qualification are determined. IGNITE aims to continue its mission by supporting SCA 5, a constitutional amendment to remove discrimination prohibitions from public education, and by urging UC President Janet Napolitano to allocate \$10 million to student run recruitment and retention centers.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 981-7170 Stefan Elgstrand, Intern 981-7170

- ATTACHMENT
 1: Resolution in Support of IGNITE
 2: Letter to UC President Janet Napolitano

RESOLUTION NO. ###,###-N.S.

SUPPORT IGNITE AND END THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISION PIPELINE

WHEREAS, starting in 1967, spending for UC/CSU went down at a rate that correlated with the increase of spending for corrections; and

WHEREAS, California currently spends \$8,482 per student in K-12 education (ranked 49th in the nation) but \$48,214 per inmate; and

WHEREAS, the majority of inmates are in prison for non-violent crimes and low-level offences such as drug possession; and

WHEREAS, California has the highest recidivism rate in the country at 67.5%, which has contributed to the overcrowding problems that the US Supreme Court has deemed unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, minorities make up a disproportionate amount of the inmate population, with Latinos and African Americans making up 41% and 29% of the inmate population respectively, but each making up 38.2% and 6.6% of the state population respectively; and

WHEREAS, zero tolerance policies that include ambiguous suspension regulations have led to a disproportionate amount of underrepresented youths being suspended or expulsed from school, significantly increasing the chances of dropping out of the education system and falling into the prison system; and

WHEREAS, IGNITE aims to address the problems of the student-to-prison pipeline by reforming zero tolerance policies in the K-12 system, giving underrepresented students better access to higher education through the increase of educational spending by reducing prison spending, and promoting retention programs to keep students in the education system.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley does hereby support IGNITE (Invest in Graduation Not Incarceration, Transform Education).

Dear UC President Janet Napolitano,

The City of Berkeley asks that you assist the UCSA (University of California Student Association) and its IGNITE (Invest in Graduation Not Incarceration, Transform Education) action committee by allocating additional funds to student run recruitment and retention centers. With a minimum of an additional \$10 million, these programs can dramatically increase their effectiveness.

As our new UC President, we understand that it must have been disheartening to read recently in the East Bay Express about the declining African American attendees to UC Berkeley. We feel that increasing the use of recruitment and retention centers can correct this growing problem and many others by making students feel more welcomed.

The recruitment and retention centers on our UC campuses provide an important resource to combating the educational barriers that plague our underserved, underrepresented, and low-income students. These centers are student run organizations that seek to deliver educational equity by fostering academic and cultural development through their many community events. These centers visit underserved schools to empower students to pursue higher education in an attempt to break educational barriers and increase retention rates among marginalized groups on the UC campuses.

We ask that your leadership will bring a positive change to our state's beloved UC system and promote the diversity and acceptance that our UC schools have always stood for by promoting the recruitment and retention centers with the much-needed additional funds.

Sincerely,

City of Berkeley