



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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November 25, 2019

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: *Cynthia McCoy Miller for*
Bobby D. Cagle
Director

RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 REVISED BOARD MOTION (ITEM NO. 22) – RESPONDING TO THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO SUPPORT FOSTER YOUTH WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

On September 24, 2019, your Board approved a Board motion, authored by Supervisors Kuehl and Solis, directing County Counsel to oversee the Office of Child Protection’s investigation into the death of Andrew M. and report back in 60 days with:

1. An evaluation of the case and identification of any potential systemic issues, including but not limited to sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression; and
2. Recommendations for strengthening or modifying relevant services.

Further, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office (CEO), Office of Child Protection, Department of Mental Health (DMH), and Probation Department (Probation), and in consultation with experts from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ+) community, to:

1. Create and implement training for prospective caregivers, caregivers, and providers with DCFS and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support, and knowledge of related resources in the community;

2. Create and implement, in consultation with labor partners, training for employees with DCFS and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support, and knowledge of related resources in the community;
3. Create and implement prevention and intervention services that minimize family rejection when such services are necessary;
4. Create and implement services and youth development programs that focus on permanency, well-being, and establish independent life skills that take into consideration specific challenges and discrimination faced by youth who identify as LGBTQ+;
5. Provide a status report on implementation of the expanded capacity of transitional housing and how the additional capacity will meet a variety of needs, including the needs of youth who identify as LGBTQ+, pursuant to the November 20, 2018 Board motion; and
6. Report back on implementation of the above directives and identified funding, including consideration of the proposed budget pursuant to the report back to the January 9, 2018 Board motion, within 60 days.

This report provides the Board with DCFS' efforts, in collaboration with the aforementioned County departments noted in the Board Motion, on implementing directives one through six, stated above, that were further directed by the Board.

Collaboration Efforts with DMH and Probation

In response to the Board's Motion, DCFS contacted both DMH and Probation. DMH had no additional information to report and confirmed that their department is in the process of implementing the recommendations outlined in their report, entitled *Supporting and Serving LGBTQ Youth Motion 2019 Update*.

Probation completed a formal response under separate cover (please see attached).

Update on Directives

Directive #1:

Create and implement training for prospective caregivers, caregivers, and providers with DCFS and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support, and knowledge of related resources in the community.

Out-of-Home Care Management Division

DCFS (e.g. Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD), Training Section, Contracts Administration Division/Contract Compliance Section, Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section) collaborates regularly with DMH and Probation to ensure that

providers are monitored and given the support necessary to deliver the high-quality services needed for all children in care, including LGBTQ+ youth.

DCFS' OHCMD confirmed that all out-of-home care placement contracts include provisions requiring agency staff and caregivers to be trained and ensure access to services, resources, and supports aimed at delivering quality care and supervision of LGBTQ+ youth. The following FFA contract language has already been incorporated in existing contracts:

15.3.14.2 CONTRACTOR shall provide instruction to the Resource Family on developing cultural humility, competency, and sensitivity and related best practices to provide adequate care for children across diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds as well as children identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and further develop ways to provide opportunities to encourage the development of the child's cultural awareness, ethnic, racial, and sexual identity, thereby increasing self-esteem.

It is also noteworthy to mention that the OHCMD Program Development Section is working on strengthening requirements in placement contracts to increase support and safety of LGBTQ+ youth. A contract amendment is currently in process by the Department's Contracts Administration Division (CAD) Development Section to incorporate the proposed affirming language below in accordance with State All County Letter (ACL) 19-27:

- Foster Family Agencies (FFA) and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) (Proposed updated language)

2.4.1 For transgender children, the CONTRACTOR shall provide services in accordance to the guidance and instructions provided in the ACL 19-27 Gender Affirming Care for Minor and Non-Minor Dependents in Foster Care (see Exhibit A-1, Reference Links) and the Placement Coordinating Memorandum titled Transgender Children/Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) in Out-of-Home Care (Exhibit A-18) prepared in collaboration between DCFS, Probation Child Welfare (PCW), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD).

Following the September 24, 2019, Board Motion, the OHCMD surveyed various FFAs, Group Homes (GHs), and STRTPs regarding the mandatory staff and caregiver training delivery as required by their contracts to ensure effective engagement, quality supportive services, and compassionate care for foster youth who identify as LGBTQ+. The responses revealed that providers are delivering the required training and are open to obtaining additional training.

Resource Family Recruitment and Approval Division

DCFS' Resource Family Recruitment and Approval Division (RFRAD) is responsible for actively recruiting and developing resource families to provide placement resources for children. RFRAD sponsors general recruitment activities such as informational orientations, resource fairs, and community booths as well as targeted recruitment efforts in neighborhoods and communities, including LGBTQ+ affirming faith-based venues. RFRAD also sponsors child-specific recruitment activities on behalf of over 400 children awaiting adoptive families. These activities involve Wednesday's Child with FOX 11 News, the Heart Gallery LA, and adoption matching fairs. RFRAD's recruitment flyers, brochures, and websites (FosterLAKids.org) include visual representations of all types of families, including LGBTQ+ families.

Additionally, in an effort to recruit LGBTQ+ families, the RFRAD hosts outreach events at LGBTQ+ affirming churches and other affirming venues. During these events, a panel is put together to address questions from families about becoming resource parents, and at least one LGBTQ+ family is invited to participate. DCFS also collaborated with RaiseAChild on launching multi-media National Foster Care Awareness Month and National Adoption Month campaigns designed to update and enhance the public's perception of foster parents. The campaigns unfolded over radio, television, print, and social media, and they distributed banners across the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach that featured images of resource parents, including LGBTQ+ parents. The RFRAD will also be participating in the Los Angeles LGBT Center's (Center) Models of Pride Conference at Los Angeles City College.

RFRAD ensures that resource parent orientations and Resource Family Approval (RFA) training curriculum (provided to both community families and relatives) contains LGBTQ+ affirming language and information to address the needs of LGBTQ+ children and youth in the foster care system. The RFA training curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Safeguarding a child's right to have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits;
- No discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, or HIV status;
- Cultural needs of children, cultural competency and sensitivity, and best practices for adequate care of children across diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, including children who identify as LGBTQ+;
- The rights of LGBTQ+ youth and youth living with HIV in foster care and the juvenile justice systems;

- Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth: A Guide for Foster Parents; and Rights of LGBTQ+ children in foster care.

As per the recommendation of DCFS' LGBTQ+ Steering Committee, the Resource Family Pre-Approval Training Curriculum is in the process of being reviewed and enhanced. In addition, the RFRAD is in the process of collaborating with agencies that already have LGBTQ+ training curriculum to provide training for all existing resource families on LGBTQ+ issues in 2020.

RFRAD staff who work with potential resource families are trained to thoroughly assess a caregiver's ability to support a child's development, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE), including when a child identifies as LGBTQ+. The training curriculum emphasizes the need to not simply accept but actively support and affirm LGBTQ+ youth and makes it clear that if a caregiver(s) cannot uphold this expectation, they may withdraw from the approval process.

Community-Based Support Division

DCFS has an LGBTQ+ Steering Committee and recently established an LGBTQ+ External Partner Relations subcommittee. The subcommittee held its first meeting on November 13, 2019. Representatives from various DCFS contracted providers and non-contracted community providers attended the meeting, including 12 providers who offer LGBTQ+ services within their respective agencies. The subcommittee's goals include identifying LGBTQ+ resources throughout Los Angeles County and LGBTQ+ training opportunities for service providers, and developing strategies to address the Board's recommendation in regard to external partnerships. The information gleaned from the inaugural meeting will be gathered and shared with all current caregivers, prospective caregivers, and community providers in the form of a resource guide.

Additionally, the External Partner Relations subcommittee will be sponsoring a Countywide LGBTQ+ provider network meeting in April 2020 that will help identify who in the community is already working with this youth population. Agencies will complete a questionnaire addressing the type of services provided, the target population(s) served, whether their office is a safe space site, who they collaborate with for services, and what linkages are provided to youth.

DCFS' Community-Based Support Division (CBSD) sponsors Learning Network events for all of its contracted providers, including Family Preservation, Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, Prevention and Aftercare (P&A), Partnership for Families, and Adoption Promotion Support Services. These learning opportunities take place either quarterly or semi-annually and consist of a full day of shared learning

and networking. There is also a Learning Network Steering Committee, which identifies topics for each learning event.

The next scheduled Learning Network event sponsored by DCFS' CBSD will take place on February 20, 2020, and will have an LGBTQ+ focus. For the February convening, the committee will work with the LGBTQ+ Steering Committee on identifying subject matter experts to present on various topics of importance to the LGBTQ+ community. The February convening will include information on available resources, and each provider will have an opportunity to share what they are doing currently to provide support and services for our LGBTQ+ community.

Directive #2:

Create and implement, in consultation with labor partners, training for employees with DCFS and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support, and knowledge of related resources in the community.

To date, over 2,700 DCFS managers, supervisors, and line staff have completed the Department's mandatory LGBTQ+ training. The training covers LGBTQ+ relevant concepts, including SOGIE, principles for effective communication, and a review of the legal and professional standards for serving this specific population. DCFS trainers continue to deliver LGBTQ+ training on an ongoing basis both to trainees in the CSW Academy and seasoned staff in our regional offices. Further, to ensure that all staff are trained in LGBTQ+ competencies, the DCFS Training Section is actively working on adding additional training opportunities.

Additionally, DCFS entered into a new contract with the Center to begin training DCFS staff. The contract was executed in October 2019, and sessions include coaching-intensive LGBTQ+ training for all staff and managers, designed to build internal capacity. The training by the Center is expected to commence in December 2019.

Directive #3:

Create and implement prevention and intervention services that minimize family rejection when such services are necessary.

DCFS' CBSD is working on identifying contracted providers to develop prevention and intervention services for our LGBTQ+ children and youth. These services will be available to any resident of Los Angeles County, irrespective of DCFS involvement. The identified agencies will be vetted and trained and will need to demonstrate the requisite competencies to best support our LGBTQ+ children and youth. We anticipate this to be completed by June 30, 2020.

Directive #4:

Create and implement services and youth development programs that focus on permanency, well-being, and establish independent life skills that take into consideration specific challenges and discrimination faced by youth who identify as LGBTQ+.

The Youth Development Services/Independent Living Program (YDS/ILP) maintains a website (<http://www.ilponline.org/Resources/LGBTQ>) that includes a section for LGBTQ+ youth. The website provides contact information for various available community resources including but not limited to: The Center, The Youth Center on Highland, Penny Lane Transition Age Youth Drop-In Centers (With a Little Help from My Friends and Yellow Submarine Drop-In Centers), Children's Hospital's Center for Transyouth Health and Development, and Village Family Services (based in North Hollywood), which works closely with DCFS and has drop-in centers for LGBTQ+ youth.

In addition, the Youth Development Services Special Projects/Volunteers and Interns Program (YDS/VIP) is in the process of making the following changes to help identify and better serve youth who identify as LGBTQ+:

- The YDS/VIP will add additional categories to capture gender identity, sexual orientation, gender pronouns, and preferred name on applications and referral forms for the Youth on the Move and Bridge to Work Programs. These new forms will be updated and distributed in January 2020.
- By February 28, 2020, YDS/VIP will explore the feasibility of adding language in subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with South Bay Workforce Investment Board/Department of Public Social Services for Bridge to Work outlining the changes identified in bullet 1 above.
- By June 30, 2020, YDS/VIP staff will participate in training to achieve enhanced competency in working with LGBTQ+ youth, specifically around employment.
- By June 30, 2020, SOGIE training for subcontractors serving youth will be coordinated/planned for America's Job Centers of CA (AJCCs). Training will be offered by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center and will include but not be limited to the following: "How to Find Transgender-Friendly Employers," "Navigating Preferred Name and Gender Pronouns with Employers," and "Building Transgender-Inclusive Employment Services."

Directive #5:

Provide a status report on implementation of the expanded capacity of transitional housing and how the additional capacity will meet a variety of needs, including the

needs of youth who identify as LGBTQ+, pursuant to the November 20, 2018, Board Motion.

The capacity expansion efforts for the Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus) and Transitional Housing Placement Program for Non-Minor Dependents (THPP-NMD) programs are currently underway. On November 12, 2019, your Board approved for DCFS and Probation to amend the current THPP-NMD and THP-Plus contracts to increase the programs' bed capacities by up to 33 percent and 50 percent, respectively, using a phased-in approach. As a result of the increase in capacity, DCFS will work with the program providers to ensure the provision of a safe and affirming environment by dedicating a portion of the beds to LGBTQ+ youth.

Both housing programs serve youth who identify as LGBTQ+. Per our current THP-Plus and THPP-NMD contracts, housing providers are required to train all interns and volunteer personnel (including host family foster parents) within 90 days of starting employment. This training must address the youths' right to have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, benefits, and not be subjected to discrimination or harassment based on actual or perceived LGBTQ+ status. A minimum of one hour of cultural competency training is required to address the needs of youth who identify as LGBTQ+.

Directive #6:

Report back on implementation of the above directives and identified funding, including consideration of the proposed budget pursuant to the report back to the January 9, 2018, Board Motion, within 60 days.

Most of the above directives are implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Many of the activities that fall under each of the six directives are or may be covered under existing funding, namely P&A dollars. It should be noted that with respect to training specifically, there is some federal matching funding for training of staff; however, there is currently no reserve in the Department's budget to cover new or additional activities and/or resources that are not already covered under existing contracts or funding. A cost assessment will be done to determine how new/additional recommendations can be funded. Funding associated with the Families First Act may assist DCFS with instituting immediate supports for LGBTQ+ youth. The outcome of the funding assessment will be included in our next report update.

Conclusion

Our respective departments remain committed to ensuring that LGBTQ+ youth will thrive in safe, supporting, and affirming environments, and are judiciously responding to the needs of this vulnerable population with a sense of urgency.

Honorable Board of Supervisors
November 25, 2019
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We are thankful for your Board's continued support and commitment to ensuring that the County of Los Angeles attains equity for our LGBTQ+ children and youth. We appreciate this unique opportunity to collaborate with other County departments, youth, and key stakeholders to improve the well-being and quality of care for this underserved population.

If you have any questions or need additional information, you may call me at (213) 351-5600, or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

BDC:BTN:CMM
APP:kjh

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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TERRI L. McDONALD
Chief Probation Officer

November 25, 2019

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Terri L. McDonald
Chief Probation Officer

SUBJECT: **RESPONDING TO THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO SUPPORT FOSTER YOUTH WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+ (ITEM NO. 22, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2019)**

On September 24, 2019, on motion of Supervisors Solis and Kuehl, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Director of Children and Family Services, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Director of the Office of Child Protection, the Director of Mental Health and the Chief Probation Officer, in consultation with experts from the LGBTQ+ community, to complete the following actions and report back to the Board in 60 days on the implementation of the below directives and identified funding, including consideration of the proposed budget pursuant to the report back requested by Board Order No. 2 of January 9, 2018. (19-6274):

- 1. Create and implement training for prospective caregivers, caregivers and providers with the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support and knowledge of related resources in the community**

Currently trainings such as these are provided through the Department of Mental Health (DMH) as part of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) curriculum. Courses are provided throughout the year for resource families and providers. Probation Department (Probation) sworn personnel attends such classes to provide caregivers and providers additional supportive services. Additionally, the Probation Department

provides refreshers/updates to Resource Families and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) providers on various aspects related to LGBTQ+ children residing in Residential Programs or with Resource Families through Foster Family Agencies (FFA) at the regularly scheduled monthly and quarterly forums throughout the County. Refresher course curriculum also includes a review of the "Transgender Youth in Care" memorandum, which was finalized in November 2017.

Probation is currently planning "Conversation Café" events for FY 2019-20. These events will focus on support for resource families. The purpose of these meetings is to provide LGBTQ+ youth support and knowledge of resources in their respective communities. This will also be an opportunity for community members to be educated about the *One Degree* web-based application. *One Degree* is an application that offers 24/7 access to free life improving resources and is also utilized by Probation Officers as they provide support to the community. During Conversation Café events, *One Degree* representatives will provide resource families training to effectively navigate the system to both explore and identify the most appropriate resources for them and the youth under their care.

Probation will continue to provide presentations at the STRTP Quarterly Provider Meetings. During these presentations, Department personnel speak about LGBTQ+ and adopting a trauma-informed approach to build environments and relationships that promote resilience; and prevent and/or minimize the effects of trauma among LGBTQ+ youth in the system.

The Probation Department will also continue to provide trainings/courses such as, but not limited to the following:

- *Nola Brantley Speaks*. Nola Brantley Speaks is contractor led training, provided through resources allocated by Probation. The provided curriculum cover topics such as the sexual exploitation and commercial exploitation of LGBTQ+ youth. Since September 2016, approximately 1,400 people have participated in such trainings, approximately 364 (26%) were foster care providers and FFA's.
- *Becoming a Trans Ally*. This course provides focused educational topics such as what allies are, developing competency around understanding what "LGBTQ" means, finding out about the experiences of the LGBTQ population, and genuinely knowing what ally behaviors to deploy in every situation. Approximately 120 Departmental personnel have trained in this course, including eighteen foster care providers.

2. Create and implement, in consultation with labor partners, training for employees with DCFS and Probation on LGBTQ+ identity development, providing support and knowledge of related resources in the community

As previously indicated, trainings of these types are currently being provided by various County departments. In addition, Probation will continue to work with its contracted national expert to incorporate SOGIE questions into data management systems, trainings of staff on the needs of LGBTQ+ youth, address unexpected data challenges around data sharing, and assist in identifying appropriate programs for LGBTQ+ youth. Probation will ensure to include its labor partners during the development of each strategic initiative. It has been determined that the most effective trainings are jointly participated by County personnel, caregivers and providers. These joint trainings provide a unified approach and common language that ultimately ensure that the youth, especially vulnerable populations such as the LGBTQ+, are provided the most appropriate care, support and resources.

In November 2017, Probation developed, coordinated, and continues to provide its Officers a mandatory four-hour training course on *90 Day Transition Planning for Foster Youth prior to Aging Out of Foster Care*. This training provides a comprehensive set of strategies and administrative actions to combat homelessness in Los Angeles County, with an emphasis on LGBTQ+ populations. With the direction from the contracted national expert, Probation will continue to assess the development and deployment of additional trainings and resources to better educate departmental personnel in providing quality services and support to the LGBTQ+ youth, families, and providers.

3. Create and implement prevention and intervention services that minimize family rejection when such services are necessary

Probation has and will continue to participate in the review of program statement revisions for all providers transitioning to higher levels of care under CCR. The program statements must include specific details regarding services provided to families and youth, including issues experienced by LGBTQ+ youth, particularly in the areas of protection from harassment and bullying and limiting rejection from family. Additionally, revisions of the statements of work for all out-of-home care providers strengthen this approach to ensuring services are in place to protect all youth, provide a safe place free from harassment and/or discrimination, and provide families for all youth who have no available or suitable family.

During the Spring of 2019, Probation distributed a resource referral for Transition Aged Youth (TAY) drop-in Center (Village Family Services) located in North Hollywood, for youth identified as LGBTQ+ and the STRTP caseworkers. In addition, all youth on a bench warrant status were mailed the same resource referral forms to their most current identified addresses. The resources provided by such referrals

increase efforts in promoting safety and prevention of homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth. These resources were also incorporated in Safety Plans for youth and discussed during the Child Family Team (CFT) process.

Probation has continued to identify and participate in various trainings developed due to CCR, regarding LGBTQ+ youth. Training courses such as *Embracing Identities Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in the Mental Health and Child Welfare Systems*, have been offered via web-based platforms. Such courses discuss many opportunities for prevention and intervention services. Probation will continue to identify additional resources and opportunities for implementation of prevention and intervention services for all its youth to minimize family rejections, including LGBTQ+ populations.

- 4. Create and implement services and youth development programs that focus on permanency, well-being, and establish independent life skills that take into consideration specific challenges and discrimination faced by youth who identify as LGBTQ+**

Probation provides Permanency Officers who work directly with a youth's case management Officer to conduct family finding, reunification, adoption, and legal guardianship for all youth who have no suitable or available family. Probation has and will continue to work closely with providers and Probation personnel to place LGBTQ+ youth with loving and supportive families. The Probation Department's Youth Development Services/Independent Living Program and local STRTPs work together to ensure youth who identify as LGBTQ+ receive support and services as they transition through the juvenile system and during re-entry.

The Probation Department's Child Trafficking Unit Operations currently provides resource linkage with Commercially and Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Advocates to provide supportive services to LGBTQ+ youth who are also identified as TAY. Through collaborative efforts with the Los Angeles LGBT Center, youth are also provided with opportunities for services, mentorship and additional supports.

- 5. Provide a status report on implementation of the expanded capacity of transitional housing and how the additional capacity will meet a variety of needs, including the needs of youth who identify as LGBTQ+, pursuant to Board Order No. 2 of November 20, 2018**

Probation anticipates that the expanded capacity of transitional housing will provide greater opportunities to serve the population of young adults who continue to require extended foster care benefits. As this applies to LGBTQ+ youth, this is of great importance, as this population is disproportionately affected by housing instability as

a result of continuing challenges stemming from family rejection, bullying, harassment, mental health concerns, and employment challenges.

CONCLUSION

As indicated in our response to your Board related to the January 9, 2018 motion, Probation has allocated available resources in an effort to continue providing services to address the programmatic needs of LGBTQ+ youth under its supervision. In collaboration with County and community partners, the Department is determined to provide continuous quality improvements to the trainings and programs stated herein. We will keep the Board apprised of any significant challenges or the need for additional resources.

Please feel free to contact me or Sheila E. Mitchell, Chief Deputy, Juvenile Services, at (562) 940-2511, or your staff may contact Felicia Cotton, Deputy Director, Juvenile Field Services, at (562) 940-2526.

TLM:SEM:LD:nm

c: Honorable Victor Greenberg, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court
Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
Celia Zavala, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Mary C. Wickham, County Counsel
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