

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE FIGHT FOR IMMIGRANT DEFENDERS

1. Do you think that immigrants facing deportation who are in jail should have the right to a lawyer? Outline the reasons for and against.
2. How do you think that social change occurs? For example, when the SF Public Defender's office decided that it wanted to represent immigrants who are detained in immigration court, what steps did they take to achieve this goal? Who did they have to influence or persuade to support their initiative? What were the tools or means that they used to make their case to the public and to the decision-makers?
3. In organizing support for the initiative to defend immigrants, the Public Defender's office developed alliances with nearly 100 organizations and agencies who supported their cause, many who testified at the hearing before the Board of Supervisors. Why was this important? What impact did this have on the Board of Supervisors' decision?
4. The media also played an important role in publicizing the plight of immigrants who were detained in immigration court. What role did the media play in shaping public opinion on the Public Defender's initiative? How are policymakers influenced by media?
5. The Public Defender modeled its program after a similar program in New York City, where public defenders provide representation to detained immigrants. How might the fact that another city adopted a similar program help convince policymakers in San Francisco to support the Public Defender's office's plan?
6. The Public Defender only received some of the attorneys and support staff it had originally requested. As a result, the office cannot provide representation to all of the detained immigrants. How can it make a strong case in the future for more attorneys and staff to represent more detained immigrants? What information should be provided to the public in order to support the continuance of the program?
7. How does San Francisco's decision to fund the legal representation of detained immigrants affect the national and international dialogue surrounding the treatment of immigrants? Will San Francisco's actions have an effect on whether other cities do the same?

8. President Trump and members of his administration have said that the federal government will penalize sanctuary cities who provide protection to immigrants facing deportation by withholding federal funds. How does San Francisco's actions to provide legal representation to detained immigrants conflict with the President's stated policy or executive order? When a city acts, to what degree does it have to comport with the President's stated policy or executive order?

9. Public Defender Jeff Adachi talks about his family's experience during World War II of being incarcerated in internment camps due to their Japanese ancestry. What parallels exist between the internment of Japanese Americans and what is happening today? How might his family's experiences caused Jeff Adachi to step forward to have his office represent immigrants facing detention?

10. Deputy Public Defender Francisco Ugarte talks about his passion for representing immigrants facing deportation. Why do you think his work is important to him? Why do you think he feel so strongly about this issue?