



# Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission



## Resolution in Support of Los Angeles County Charter Amendment

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) hereby resolves as follows:

**WHEREAS**, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), was established in 1850 and employs more than 10,000 deputies, runs the nation's largest jail system, and patrols approximately 2,500 of the county's 4,000 square miles.<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, since LASD's inception, the sheriff has managed the department without any meaningful oversight. This has led to a lack of accountability and transparency within the LASD. And, as one has witnessed with past and current sheriffs, checks and balances in county administration are weak. Former Sheriff Lee Baca (currently in prison for obstruction of justice) made that clear in 2012 when asked how he is to be held accountable for his conduct in office, he replied "*Don't elect me.*"<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in an attempt to provide greater oversight of the LASD, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has implemented accountability measures such as the Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence in 2011, the Office of Inspector General in 2014, and this Commission in 2016. Recently, the County supported AB 1506, which requires the California Attorney General to investigate certain deputy shootings. Also, multiple groups are investigating the issue of deputy gangs within the LASD.

**WHEREAS**, this Commission has witnessed several efforts to reverse LASD's policies designed to enhance accountability, to wit: there has been a weakening of the disciplinary process,<sup>3</sup> efforts to ensure independent oversight of deputy shootings investigations have been stymied,<sup>4</sup> attempts to intimidate and belittle individuals and entities tasked with providing oversight of the LASD, including initiating a criminal investigation of the county inspector general are ongoing,<sup>5</sup> and the downplaying of the existence of deputy gangs as mere hazing.

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<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Patt, "Why LA County has a politician with a gun and a badge: From Sheriff Villanueva back to 1850". *The Los Angeles Times* 3 Aug. 2021 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-08-03/why-l-a-county-has-a-politician-with-a-gun-and-a-badge-from-sheriff-villanueva-back-to-1850>)

<sup>2</sup> Greene, Robert, "Opinion: When the Board of Supervisors last threw out the sheriff". *The Los Angeles Times* 15 Oct. 2020 (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-10-15/firing-the-sheriff>)

<sup>3</sup> Office of Inspector General, "Report Back on LASD Internal Administrative Investigations and Dispositions of Disciplinary Action". (April 2019)

<sup>4</sup> Tchekmedyian, Alene, "Deputies who shot Dijon Kizzee were trainee and supervisor, sources say". *The Los Angeles Times* 3 Sep. 2020 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-03/dijon-kizzee-shooting-trainee>)

<sup>5</sup> Lau, Maya, "L.A. County sheriff's top watchdog is under investigation – by the L.A. County sheriff." *The Los Angeles Times* 14 Aug. 2019 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-08-14/la-county-sheriffs-department-launches-investigation-against-its-chief-watchdog>)

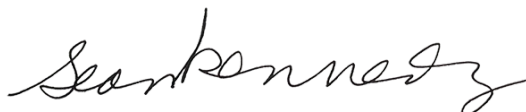
**WHEREAS**, this Resolution seeks to prevent any sheriff from pushing the boundaries of accountability and oversight. Sheriffs have great power, and a sheriff who abuses it has the potential to do tremendous harm.<sup>6</sup>

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to place a charter amendment on the November ballot to amend the Los Angeles County Charter to create a procedure that will allow the Board of Supervisors to impeach and remove the sheriff by a four-fifths vote for serious violations of the public trust, including, but no limited to, serious crime, unconstitutional conduct, and abuse of power.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to place a charter amendment on the November ballot to amend the Los Angeles County Charter to incorporate the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission and the Office of Inspector General into the Los Angeles County Charter, including the power to subpoena records and testimony to fulfill our duty. Permanently fixing the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission and the Office of Inspector General in the Los Angeles County Charter will ensure that civilian oversight remains a permanent body providing oversight to the LASD.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to place a charter amendment on the November ballot to amend the Los Angeles County Charter to authorize the Board of Supervisors to oversee and set policies for the LASD, provided that they do not interfere with the statutory authority of the sheriff or otherwise conflict with state law, and create a mandatory process for the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission to recommend policies for the LASD, and for the Board of Supervisors to deliberate on these policies, proceed with any actions necessary and approve final policies.

May 19, 2022



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Dated

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Sean Kennedy, Chair

Brian K. Williams, Executive Director, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, does hereby certify that the above is true and correct copy of the Resolution duly adopted by the Commission at its meeting held on May 19, 2022, and as same appears of record in the official Statement of Proceedings of said Commission.

May 19, 2022



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Dated

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Brian K. Williams, Executive Director

<sup>6</sup> Krinsky, Mariam Aroni and Chemerinsky, Erwin, “Op-Ed: Villanueva has unchecked power in the sheriff’s office. This can be fixed.” *The Los Angeles Times* 15 April 2022 (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-04-15/op-ed-sheriffs-unchecked-power-villanueva>)