



**Sybil Brand Commission
For Institutional Inspections**

**Annual Report
2015**

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSIONERS

First District



Johanna Arias-Bhatia



Frank S. Bacio



Percy Duran III

Second District



Susan Burton



Cheryl Grills Ph.D.

Third District



Keren Goldberg



Theresa Zhen

Fourth District



Donald S. Andrews



Eleanor R. Montaña
Chairperson

Fifth District



Barbara Bigby
Vice Chairperson



Anne Hill

BACKGROUND

The Mission of the Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional Inspections (SBC) is to ensure that conditions and treatment of adults and children under the supervision of County custody and care facilities reflect safe, humane, and best practices.

Sybil Brand founded the SBC in 1959 after observing the overcrowded conditions of incarcerated juveniles, men, and women in Los Angeles County.

In recent history, the Sybil Brand Commission (“SBC” or “the Commission”) is responsible for conducting inspections of jails, lockups, probation camps and correctional facilities in the County of Los Angeles. These inspections involve a complete evaluation of the effective and economical administration of each facility’s cleanliness, discipline practices, and conditions of confinement of its prisoners. Additionally, the SBC may inspect the permit and registration of such jail and lockup, whether the institution is located within or outside of the corporate limits of any incorporated city. The SBC also inspects Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation Department (PD) group home facilities to ascertain their conditions.

At the conclusion of 2015, the SBC had eight active Commissioners and one Commissioner on leave.

AUTHORITY

The SBC is authorized by Chapter 2.82 of the Los Angeles County Code and consists of ten members; two from each Supervisorial District, with the Sheriff and the Chief Probation Officer serving as ex-officio members. The Commission meets weekly on Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., in Room 372 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

DUTIES

The duties of the SBC are generally defined by Sections 2.82.070, 2.82.080, and 2.82.090 of the Los Angeles County Code.

2.82.070 General Duties

The SBC shall conduct inspections as provided in this chapter and shall advise on industrial and educational programs for both juvenile and adult detention inmates in County jail facilities and probation camps.

2.82.080 Inspection of Jails, Probation and Correctional Facilities

At least once each year or more often as the SBC may deem necessary or proper or as directed by a judge of the Superior Court, the members of the SBC or of a committee of the SBC shall visit and inspect each jail or lockup in the County, and County probation and correctional facilities.

2.82.090 Inspections

The members of the SBC, in visiting and inspecting jails and lockups as provided in this chapter, shall examine every department of each institution visited and shall ascertain its condition as to effective and economical administration, the cleanliness, discipline and comfort of its inmates, and in any other respects, whether such institution is located within or without the corporate limits of any incorporated city.

2015 GOALS

In January 2015, the SBC established and approved the following goals and objectives to strategically assess and plan the work of the Commission throughout the year:

1. Visit one Los Angeles County Probation camp or Juvenile Hall per month to ensure equitable coverage of all juvenile lockup facilities and ensure compliance with policies and practices related to the management of Probation camps and Juvenile Halls.
2. Visit and inspect all Los Angeles County group homes, jails and lockup facilities at least once per year to ensure compliance with policies and practices related to the management of group homes, jails and lockup facilities.
3. Collaborate with DCFS, PD, Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LASD), Auditor- Controller (AC), Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Internal Services Department (ISD) to ensure the safety of youth in group homes, probation camps and inmates in the jail/lockup facilities.
4. Collaborate and coordinate with relevant Los Angeles County Commissions to share information and support efforts of mutual interest related to group homes and jail facilities.
5. Identify issues, trends and efforts related to Child Trafficking to determine how the SBC can assist current County efforts.
6. Obtain the floor plans of each Los Angeles County jail and increase inspection coverage of all sections of each jail.

The SBC's 2015 activities and goals are aligned with the goal of the County—"To Enrich Lives through Effective and Caring Service" and the County's Strategic Goal #1 and #3.

During Fiscal year (FY) 2015, the Commission launched new efforts to actively pursue the goals set forth in LA County Strategic Goal #1 "Maximize the effectiveness of processes, structure, operations, and strong fiscal management to support timely delivery of customer-oriented and efficient public services" by commencing a review of the Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF) and the various County contracts impacting the inmate commissary and educational services. The SBC Commission supports the effective and economical administration of all County monies and services.

The SBC also focused its efforts in support of Los Angeles County Strategic Goal #3 "Maximize opportunities to measurably improve client and community outcomes and leverage resources through the continuous integration of health, community, and public safety services" through increased outreach to other county entities (Commissions, Departments, and Community Partners) to explore collaborative opportunities and information sharing to measurably improve county outcomes and leverage resources.

Internally, the SBC held its fourth election since its formation 56-years ago electing a new Chair, Commissioner Barbara Bigby and Vice Chair, Commissioner Cheryl Grills. In addition, the SBC is rewriting its By-Laws to address viability concerns, scope, and procedures. These changes have revitalized and sharpened the Commission's efforts to support the mission of Los Angeles County.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY: CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In FY 2014-2015, there were a number of important developments within the County system that directly impacted the Commission's work. These are summarized below.

County Supervisorial Elections and New Commissioner Appointments

Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 culminated in the election of two new County Supervisors: Supervisor Hilda Solis, District 1; Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, District 3. In District 1, SBC Commissioner Frank S. Bacio, Vice Chairperson, retired from service. Subsequently, Supervisor Hilda Solis appointed Commissioners Johanna Arias-Bhatia and Percy Duran. In District 3, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl appointed Commissioners Keren Goldberg and Theresa Zhen. As of January 27, 2016 Commissioner Goldberg retired leaving one vacancy in District 3. These appointments were vital to staffing the Commission at or close to scale as defined in Chapter 2.82 of the Los Angeles County Code.

Creation of New Jails: Planning Stages

In September 2015, the Board of Supervisors (BOS or Board) approved a \$2-billion plan to build a replacement for the Men's Central Jail and a new women's jail in Lancaster. The BOS approved to reduce the approved capacity of the replacement jail (Consolidated Correctional Treatment Facility ("CCTF")) from 4,885 to 3,885 beds with the majority of beds dedicated for mental health treatment and substance abuse detoxification needs. SB90 reimbursement of money was set aside to expand community-based capacity for specialized substance use treatment services and for the Sheriff and Director of Health Services to establish a gender-responsive advisory board. Mental health issues became a focus of the Commission in the next fiscal year particularly at Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF).

Expansion of Office of Inspector General (OIG): Increased Collaboration between SBC and OIG

The OIG was created by ordinance in 2014. The Board created the OIG to provide independent and comprehensive oversight and monitoring of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and its jail facilities. On December 15, 2015, the Board made history when it authorized the Inspector General to sign a Memorandum of Agreement to Share and Protect Confidential LASD Information. The agreement allows for unprecedented access by the OIG to confidential LASD records, information and meetings. This access enables the OIG to provide aggressive and effective civilian oversight of the Sheriff's Department while protecting from disclosure confidential personnel and privileged information.

At the December 2, 2015 meeting the OIG was invited to discuss collaborative efforts between the SBC and OIG. SBC has since developed an ongoing relationship and an OIG representative attends and provides updates at the monthly SBC Business meetings. SBC shares findings and concerns gathered during Commissioner's inspections of jails.

Transition Team for the Office of Child Protection

In forming an Office of Child Protection, the BOS created a "Transition Team" to facilitate and encourage collaboration across Los Angeles County departments, agencies, and entities. One focal point was consideration of the gap in support services to relative caregivers (Kinship Care). The Transition Team also reviewed the Department of Health Services' plan to enhance the Medical Hubs. The Transition Team also tracked efforts by the Juvenile Courts to automate its data storage/recovery system for psychiatric medication authorizations (PMAs).

The BOS further moved that the Interim Chief Executive Officer work with BOS Sacramento advocates to support or pursue legislation to clarify existing law for State subsidized child development services. State law prioritizes neglected or abused children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who are at risk of being neglected or abused and, as such, clarification is needed to explicitly include foster children and children with parents who are under DCFS supervision.

Additionally, the BOS moved that the Interim Office of Child Protection evaluate hiring an expert consultant to identify each County department currently serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in any capacity, and establish an inventory of LGBTQ-specific programs among other areas of need.

The SBC Commission worked closely with the Interim Director of the Office of Child Protection on matters related to the use of psychotropic medication with children placed in DCFS and Probation group homes.

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION INSPECTIONS AND FINDINGS

2015 INSPECTIONS SUMMARY

In 2015, the Commission inspected a) DCFS group homes and Probation Department group homes across the five supervisorial districts, b) juvenile probation camps, c) County courthouses across the five supervisorial districts, and each of the County jails. In several instances, facilities were inspected multiple times within the year prompted by concerns or the need to conduct follow up related to unsatisfactory findings.

- ***Unsatisfactory Findings***

In 2015, the Commission made **13** unsatisfactory findings determinations related to lockup facilities. These findings were specific to the following facilities:

1. Camp Afflebaugh
2. Camp McNair
3. Camp Mendenhall
4. Camp Onizuka
5. Community Transition Unit – Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LACSD)
6. Community Youth Sports and Arts Foundation Group Home
7. Compton Court
8. Century Regional Detention Facility
9. El Monte Courthouse
10. Inglewood Court
11. Inglewood Juvenile Court
12. Men's Central Jail
13. Van Nuys Court

- ***Reports to BOS***

In 2015, the Commission made **13** reports to the Board of Supervisors related to group home, detention, and jail facilities. This included 2 group homes, 4 youth camps, 3 courthouses, 1 Sheriff's Station, and 3 jails:

1. Inglewood Courthouse
2. Inmate Reception Center
3. Lifecircles Group Home
4. Van Nuys Courthouse
5. Men's Central Jail (9100, 9200, 9300, 4500, 4700, 5500)
6. El Monte Courthouse
7. Century Regional Detention Facility
8. Camp Onizuka
9. Camp McNair
10. Camp Afflerbaugh
11. Compton Court
12. Camp Mendenhall
13. Community Youth Sports and Arts Foundation Group Home

- ***Major Trends & Concerns for Unsatisfactory Findings***

In the DCFS and Probation Department group homes, many of the concerns were related to the quality of facilities and maintenance, appropriate completion of Needs and Service Plans, understanding AWOL trends overall and by demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) and medications. Concerns related to the juvenile halls and camps were associated with facilities and maintenance, staffing, staff-youth interactions, and programming. In the County jails, a number of the concerns were related to facilities and maintenance, programming, staffing, medical care, and various jail practices (e.g., indigent care packages, telephone costs, vending machine prices, etc.). Details regarding the most salient unsatisfactory findings and concerns and BOS reports can be found in the next section of this report.

KEY FINDINGS, ACTIVITIES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I. INSPECTIONS FINDINGS

1) MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL

In response to public scrutiny of Men's Central Jail (MJC) and the Supervisors' decision to overhaul MJC to construct a new facility, the Commissioners performed detailed inspections of various sections of the jail in 2014-2015. The Commission intentionally focused its inspection efforts on Men's Central Jail in order to discern

relevant facility information to provide to the Board. Below is a summary of the findings:

Physical Conditions

- A high degree of deterioration in all corners of the jail: common complaints by inmates and observations during various inspections included water leakages, no hot water, clogged showers, vents trapping dust, lint, and dirt, mold growing in showers and toilets, broken toilets and urinals, aged water pipes.

Medical care

- Inadequate medical staff (2 doctors for approximately 5,000 inmates at MCJ, and a shortage of nursing personnel)
- Very slow response to requests for medical care by inmates.

Staffing

- Low staffing and heavy reliance on overtime employees potentially posing security risk for deputies and inmates.

Education Based Incarceration (EBI)

- Relatively low number of available EBI opportunities in the County jails; this is of particular concern given the changing demographics and length of incarceration in the wake of AB109 and the number of prisoners interested in participating in EBI programming.
- Lack of sufficient space to hold EBI programming.
- Challenges in coordination across departments within the jails is an impediment to community efforts to offer pro-bono EBI programming.

Price Points for "captive" consumer pool

- Price points for products sold in the commissary notably exceed current retail prices for several of the products sold in the jails.
- Price points for outgoing telephone calls notably exceed current retail prices.
- Price points for food products sold in the vending notably exceed current retail prices.

Indigent Care Packages

- Sizes of available products provided in the indigent care packages are inconsistent with the increasing length of incarceration and subsequent product purchases are sold in the commissary at prices that notably exceed current retail prices appearing to take advantage of a “captive” consumer pool.

2) JUVENILE PROBATION CAMPS

Inspections of juvenile lock up facilities included the County youth camps and the juvenile halls. The Commission noted the following in one or more facilities:

- Facilities and maintenance issues (e.g., general bathroom repair issues such as poor water drainage in bathrooms, poor water pressure and temperature regulation in bathrooms);
- Staffing (e.g., lack of adequate nursing staff in one facility); and
- Contentious staff interactions with youth (e.g., youth reporting staff taking their personal belongings, use of pepper spray, lack of telephone access, high number of incident reports, tense and conflicted relationships, longer use of special handling unit to manage behavioral/mental health issues) and programming (e.g., inadequate educational and personal development programming for youth who have completed high school).

3) CENTURY REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY (CRDF)

Second to MCJ, the commission completed the largest number of jail inspections at CRDF, which houses women. Among the modules and sections inspected a number of concerns were identified. These included:

- Facilities and maintenance problems in a number of the bathrooms (e.g., poorly regulated water temperature, gnats, rust and corrosion, slippery shower floors increasing risk of slips and falls, brown colored water emerging out of some sinks).
- Facilities and maintenance problems in the cells (e.g., dust, possibly mold buildup in the vents, broken sinks, corroded or broken toilets, 3 tier bunk beds resulting in top bunks located too close to the ceiling and light fixtures).
- Inadequate medical care (e.g., long waits to receive medical attention, poor access to mental health services).
- Staffing (limited number of deputies supervising the modules).

- Programming (e.g., limited access to education based incarceration classes, difficulties scheduling pro bono classes offered by outside groups).

II. INMATE WELFARE FUND

In 2015, the Commission made a series of inquiries into the Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF) to learn about the fund's use, its history, and its operations. SBC invited several representatives including Karen Dalton, Director of the Inmate Services Bureau of the Custody Services Division, to present at the monthly business meetings. The Commission was presented the IWF Expenditure and Revenue Summary Report for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

III. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS

In 2015, the Commission continued to raise concerns with DCFS, DMH, and PD regarding the use of psychotropic medication with children placed in DCFS and PD group homes. The Commission made further inquiries with the Juvenile Court Mental Health Services (JCMHS), raising more questions about tracking and accountability. Questions emerged related to adequate protocols to verify that psychiatrists are in fact complying with current County requirements related to monitoring children's physical health (e.g., routine review/confirmation of lipid panels, weight gain, appetite, etc.) and mental health response or sequelae (e.g., medication side effects such as suicidal ideation, changes in sleep patterns, decreased mental alertness in school, irritability, etc.). Everyone (DCFS, DMH, JCMHS, Probation, and group home staff) seems to assume that certain procedures are being followed (e.g., obtaining lipid panels to determine potential medical complications from psychotropic drug use) and no one entity in the County has taken responsibility for incorporating some type of formal review process in this regard. The Commission wrote a letter to the Office of Child Protection outlining these concerns (November 4, 2015) that was incorporated into the Interim Director's analysis and report to the BOS.

IV. COMMUNITY TRANSITION UNIT

Sybil Brand Commissioners made several visits to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Community Transition Unit (CTU) at the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) to learn about the reentry services provided to the jail population and family members.

The Commission found that the Community Transition Unit provides reentry services in two ways: (1) through the Community Reentry Resource Center (CRRC), and (2) via Case Workers (In-reach). Findings:

- CRRC services are not strategically placed. Only 10-15 people are seen per day at the CRRC windows (out of 500 released inmates a day).
- Ability to connect post-released persons to jobs is woefully inadequate. Caseworkers report anecdotally that about 80% of people lose their jobs while incarcerated in jail. There is no program in the CTU that directly employs people or provides sincere job-seeking assistance.
- There are only 2 caseworkers per facility (Twin Towers and MJC) to assist thousands of inmates and to respond to more than 100-200 requests for assistance daily.
- Some inmates are excluded from the reentry assistance - "high power, high risk" inmates, and heavily medicated inmates. At Twin Towers, where majority of population is mental health inmates who are heavily medicated, most inmates are not receiving reentry services.
- Case managers only in-reach from 7am to 12pm. There is no staff member conducting an afternoon shift of in-reach.

V. SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION SCHOLARSHIPS

The Commission, desiring to encourage and assist youth to further their educational goals, awarded three individual \$300 scholarships to exemplary youth. The scholarships were available to either youth in PD group homes or youth in DCFS group homes.

The three recipients were awarded the scholarships on June 30, 2015 at the SBC Scholarship Presentation Breakfast and then were personally recognized by the Board at the BOS agenzized meeting. The three recipients were: Jose Ambrosio, Martin Hernandez and Melissa Cortez.

Jose Ambrosio earned a place on the Principal's Honor Roll and the Dean's List for six consecutive high school semesters. He obtained part-time employment while being enrolled at Pierce Community College. Jose desires to be an automotive technician.

Martin Hernandez aspires to obtain an American Sign Language certificate, work as an interpreter and continue his education eventually earning a Masters or PhD in mathematics. Martin wants to obtain a teaching credential so that he can teach high school math. Martin currently tutors other students in math and creates You Tube videos explaining math concepts. Martin has had a distinguished high school career which included the following coursework: Honors Algebra, Honors Spanish, College Spanish, Pre-Calculus, Physics, Finance, and Robotics.

Melissa Cortez's love for animals developed into an interest to become a veterinary technician. She has enrolled at Los Angeles Mission College and is employed at Petco.

VI. GUEST SPEAKERS AND COLLABORATION WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSIONS and DEPARTMENTS

The Commission engaged with representatives from seven County departments, commissions, or community organizations in 2015.

Chief of Education Programs Los Angeles County of Education (LACOE)

Mr. Hector Murrieta

Director II Road to Success Academies, LACOE

Ms. Diana Velasquez

On July 29, 2015, the SBC in an effort to better serve the youth involved in the juvenile justice system, met with Mr. Murrieta and Ms. Velasquez. The presentation consisted of the program's core values and curriculum among other information. The SBC requested the LACOE Road to Success Academies return to further elaborate on the relationship between LACOE and University of California, Los Angeles' "Books Beyond Bars Program." The Commission also inquired about why youth at Sylmar Juvenile Hall are not allowed to participate in certain types of educational programming and about the relationship between LACOE and the Los Angeles County Library system.

Women's Commission

Representatives from the Women's Commission attended a couple of the SBC meetings expressing an interest in women incarcerated at CRDF and Twin Towers jails. In 2015, two of their Commissioners accompanied SBC Commissioners on an inspection of a section of CRDF jail.

Los Angeles County Probation Commission (LACPC)

Cyn Yamashiro

At the request of the SBC, on September 2, 2015, Mr. Yamashiro made a presentation to the Commission to begin a dialogue about how the SBC and the Probation Commission can begin to work together. The LACPC is a State of California mandated Commission (Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 225-240), which requires all counties in California to have a Juvenile Justice Commission that is responsible for overseeing the administration of laws governing the Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Detention Facilities. The Probation Commission plays an advisory role to the courts as well as serving as a Civilian Oversight over the Probation Department. The Probation Commissioners conduct random inspections of SBC and LACPC agreed to stay in touch to support efforts of mutual interest related to juvenile probation camps and other probation facilities.

National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles

Maya Paley, Director of Legislative and Community Engagement

On September 9, 2015, Ms. Paley presented the current state of Human Trafficking legislation in the state of California. Her presentation focused on both sex and labor trafficking. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is an issue that impacts DCFS. DCFS houses many CSEC in group homes, which the SBC inspects.

Juvenile Court Mental Health Services

Gia Crecelius, M.D.

Dr. Jane Tesoro, Phar.D.

On September 23, 2015, Mr. Crecelius and Dr. Tesoro presented a general overview of the services provided by DMH via the Juvenile Court Mental Health Services (JCMHS) program. The presentation highlighted the processes by which Psychotropic Medication is authorized and the general JCMHS protocol. While the presentation was informative, the Commissioners expressed concerns about policies and procedures related to monitoring of psychotropic medications as they are administered in group homes.

Children's Welfare Division, Probation Department (PD)

Anabel Rodriguez

On September 30, 2015, guest speakers provided an overview of wrap-around services as provided by DCFS, PD, and DMH. At the end of the presentation, Ms. Moran stated that she would provide a three-year report based on ethnicity and a copy of the enrollment agreement application as requested by the commissioners. Question that arose after the speaker's presentation surrounded the issues of the length of services provided, upon whose determination are services terminated and to what extent are families' requests for continuation of services weighted for consideration. Factors that also need to be considered are whether or not cases with mental health diagnosis should be closed or kept in suspense files since certain mental health diagnosis are lifelong conditions, which need to be managed versus other diagnosis such as situational depression. For example, a case with a diagnosis of Bi-Polar disorder or Schizophrenia would not be closed but merely placed in suspense while the disorder is in remission.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

Max Huntsman, Inspector General, OIG

Cathleen Beltz, Assistant Inspector General, OIG

Dan Baker, Chief Deputy, OIG

Barbara Philips, Monitor, OIG

On December 2, 2015, officials from the OIG met with the Commission to discuss the respective roles and responsibilities associated with the Los Angeles County jails. Future collaboration between both entities was discussed and an agreement was reached whereby Barbara Philips would attend the SBC monthly business meetings. In cases where an extreme level of concern is identified by the SBC, the OIG will be informed and called upon to attend other meetings.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Jennifer Hottenroth, Psy.D.

Children Services Administrator, DCFS

Luz Moran

Wrap Around Services, Probation Department (PD)

John Robinson