

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND  
SHEILA KUEHL

April 14, 2020

**Ratifying Letter Sent by the Chair of the County of Los Angeles Board of  
Supervisors to Sheriff Alex Villanueva**

The COVID-19 health crisis has become a worldwide pandemic placing the health and safety of County residents at risk. On March 4, 2020, the County of Los Angeles (County) Health Officer and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors (Board) declared a local and public health emergency. The Chair of the Board issued a Proclamation of the existence of a Local Emergency for COVID-19, which was immediately ratified by the Board at its next scheduled meeting.

As a result of the increasing number of individuals having to take time off of work due to reasons related to COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Labor announced new action on April 1, 2020, regarding how American workers and employers could benefit from the protections and relief offered by the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act, both part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The FFCRA, effective April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick

**MOTION**

SOLIS	_____
RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____

leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.

Prior to the enactment of FFCRA, more than 200 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department employees were quarantined due to possible exposure to COVID-19. On April 1, 2020, Sheriff Alex Villanueva sent a letter to the Chair of the Board requesting retroactive pay for quarantined employees who may otherwise have to use their personal sick leave. In a media interview, Sheriff Villanueva also said that deputies who were ordered to quarantine in March 2020 would not be paid which resulted in numerous threats being made against the CEO. Sheriff Villanueva was informed by the CEO and the Chair of the Board that he did not need authority from the CEO because he already had the authority to compensate the quarantined employees as a Department Head.

In response to the miscommunication to the media which resulted in threats made against the CEO, the Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, pursuant to County Code section 2.68.150, sent a 5-signature letter to Sheriff Villanueva on April 3, 2020 urging him to correct the misrepresentations.

**WE, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors ratify the attached April 3, 2020 letter from the Board of Supervisors to Sheriff Alex Villanueva concerning the pay status of deputies ordered to quarantine in March 2020.

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# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

SHEILA KUEHL

JANICE HAHN

KATHRYN BARGER

April 3, 2020

Honorable Alex Villanueva  
Sheriff, Los Angeles County  
211 West Temple Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Sheriff Villanueva,

We are writing to you today to urge you to take immediate action to correct the misrepresentations you have been actively disseminating through the media. Your actions undermine our essential shared mission of fighting the COVID-19 emergency together, as one County family, united in unwavering support to the public we are pledged to serve.

In the midst of this unprecedented crisis—when our Los Angeles County workforce is on the frontlines serving the millions of people who rely on us—you have been airing misinformation through the media and needlessly stirring public concerns with absolutely no basis in fact.

Your unfortunate and erroneous comments have been sowing confusion and controversy by raising doubts about pay for deputies you chose to put on leave last month. Of course, these deputies will be paid, as you are well aware. In fact, as a department head, you have the duty and responsibility to make sure this happens.

Although our Board of Supervisors' Chair appropriately set the record straight in a [letter](#) to you earlier this week, you have yet to correct the misimpressions you have created within the Sheriff's Department and with the public at large—exacerbating anxiety in an already stressful time by sowing false information.

Even worse, your comments have prompted social media threats against Chief Executive Officer Sachi A. Hamai from members of the public who have been angered by the false information you have disseminated.

This is completely unacceptable—not just now, in the midst of this unprecedented crisis, but ever. We expect a higher standard of behavior from our public servants in Los Angeles County, and that includes you.

Honorable Alex Villanueva  
April 3, 2020  
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Your unwarranted verbal and highly personal attacks on the CEO are inciting misinformed members of the public to share dangerous sentiments online.

This must stop—now.

The Board of Supervisors denounces these threats made against our CEO, and we call on you to do the same immediately.

We also call on you to educate yourself on the essential communication efforts now underway to keep the public informed with the accurate information they need to keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe in this difficult period.


This effort by County staff and highly professional contractors has resulted in a broad and rapid expansion of our messaging capabilities, with daily television briefings in English and Spanish; electronic billboards promoting Safer At Home messaging in multiple languages Countywide; millions of pageviews on the County's COVID-19 website created specifically to inform the public during this crisis; and millions more residents reached across all of the County's social media platforms.


We have a long road ahead of us still, but we expect you, as the Sheriff, to know and understand the value of communicating truthfully with the public through all the means at our disposal—now more than ever.


Directed in accordance with County Code Section 2.68.150.


Sincerely,

  
KATHRYN BARGER  
Chair of the Board  
Supervisor, Fifth District

  
HILDA L. SOLIS  
Supervisor, First District

  
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Supervisor, Second District

  
SHEILA KUEHL  
Supervisor, Third District

  
JANICE HAHN  
Supervisor, Fourth District