

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
AND JANICE HAHN**

July 7, 2020

Funding Probation Oversight in Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) has acted repeatedly to strengthen oversight for the Probation Department (Department) to address longstanding governance issues. On October 1, 2019, in response to robust recommendations from the Probation Reform and Implementation Team (PRIT), the Board unanimously approved a Ridley-Thomas - Solis motion creating this new oversight structure, consisting of the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) and a new Probation-focused unit within the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Per the PRIT's recommendations and Board-approved motion, POC powers will include policy review and assessment; facility inspections; an independent grievance process (once such process is approved by the Board); access to documents and data, including subpoena power; and public engagement and reporting. Following this, on January 28, 2020, the Board adopted the ordinances further establishing the POC and investigative unit within the OIG, and on February 18, 2020, adopted a robust staffing structure for both entities, ensuring the funding of prioritized POC and OIG positions in an initial implementation phase and the immediate hiring of an Executive Director for the POC.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic hit just as the recruitment for the POC was beginning. As a result, much of the work has been on hold as the County shifted into crisis

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MOTION

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response mode, implementing a hard freeze on hiring and purchases, as well as budget curtailments to address an approximately \$1 billion deficit caused by the sharp decline in revenues. As a result, many of the more recent Board-approved initiatives, including the POC, have been most impacted.

However, the need for strong oversight of the Department is only increasing in urgency. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in caring for and protecting the youth and adults in the Department's care. A recent COVID-19 outbreak among youth and staff at the Dorothy Kirby Center highlights this. Additionally, the closure of the state of California's Division of Juvenile Justice facilities underscores the need for the County to have strong oversight of juvenile justice issues.

The County must move immediately to implement the Board-approved staffing and funding necessary to establish the first phase of the POC as well as a dedicated unit within the OIG. Recent national and local events have only reaffirmed the urgent need to establish oversight entities that can increase accountability for criminal justice agencies.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to identify ongoing funding in the FY 2020-21 Supplemental Budget to restore the allocations included in the Recommended Budget including staffing and supplies for the initial implementation phase of the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) as well as the dedicated Probation Department's oversight unit within the Office of Inspector General, by curtailing additional vacant budgeted positions in the Probation Department; and
2. Direct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to resume immediately the recruitment and hiring of the Executive Director for the POC.

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(MN/KJ/CAS)