County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169

JOHN L. SCOTT, SHERIFF

August 14, 2014

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
REPORT BACK ON THE INMATE COMPLAINT SYSTEM

At the July 15, 2014, Board meeting, the Sheriff was requested to look into issues raised by a member of the public, Mr. Cameron Lyons, regarding the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (Department) inmate complaint procedures.

All inmates booked into the Los Angeles County (County) jail system receive a brochure with information regarding their rights as an inmate, the jail rules, and the services available to them. This brochure includes information regarding procedures for submitting inmate complaints. All inmates are permitted to submit a complaint, whether or not it is written on the specified form. The inmates are instructed to place their complaints in locked boxes located at all inmate housing locations, hallways, and meeting rooms of each County jail facility. Supervisors are required to check each box once per shift and retrieve all complaint forms. The supervisors document the amount of complaints collected and the time of collection in the electronic Uniform Daily Activities Log (eUDAL) for each housing location.

The Department also accepts complaints made in person, by mail, or by phone from non-involved parties on behalf of inmates. In addition, the American Civil Liberties Union has placed their mailing address and toll free telephone number in every housing location for inmates to report complaints.

During the term of incarceration referenced by Mr. Lyons, from May 15, 2014, to June 18, 2014, 116 complaints were retrieved from Mr. Lyons' housing location. A search of the eUDAL records indicates that the complaint box in his housing location was checked by a supervisor during each shift of Mr. Lyons' incarceration. Of the 116

complaints received during that time, no complaints were submitted by Mr. Lyons. As a result of this inquiry, the Department contacted Mr. Lyons, and he stated that he did not make any complaints during this specific timeframe. Mr. Lyons acknowledged in his testimony to the Board that he is familiar with the Department's complaint process and utilized it "a lot." Over the past ten years, Mr. Lyons has been incarcerated within the County's jail system seven times. The Department investigated and responded to 65 complaints submitted by Mr. Lyons during his various periods of confinement.

While the Department's current complaint system has been in place for several years, and has been approved by the American Civil Liberties Union as an acceptable practice, we do agree with Mr. Lyons' statement, "The complaint system has a lot that needs to be fixed." We recognize the challenges associated with our current practices and we have formed a team to review the inmate complaint/request system to provide recommendations for improvement.

The team has already completed a successful pilot project, which involved the installation of 17 iPad kiosks located inside housing locations at the Department's Men's Central Jail and Century Regional Detention Facility. During the 90-day pilot project, these iPads received an average of more than 3,000 complaints and requests per week, reduced the amount of staff-time needed to process the complaints, and created an automated entry into the Custody Automated Reporting and Tracking System for each complaint. The iPads also enhanced the delivery of information to inmates, providing trust account balances, release dates, and visiting schedules at their fingertips. Given the positive outcome of the pilot project, the team is now investigating the resource needs associated with expanding iPad use to other locations, including the need to upgrade the Department's Data Network.

The Department welcomes further discussion with you regarding our Department's current practices and future plans related to inmate complaints. The Department will continue to provide quarterly reports on the implementation of the Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence Recommendations including Recommendation 7.14 *(The inmate grievance process should be improved and include checks and oversight).*

Should you have any questions, please contact Acting Commander Daniel Dyer, Custody Services Division, at (213) 893-5004.

Sincerely,

JOHN L. SCOTT
SHERIFF