



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
**DRAFT STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE VIRTUAL**  
**REGULAR MEETING**



[poc.lacounty.gov](http://poc.lacounty.gov)

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021, 9:00 A.M.**

VIDEO FILE FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING

Attachment:    [Video](#)

**I.     ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

**Vice Chair Esché L. Jackson called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director conducted the roll call:**

Present:        Commissioner Danielle M. Dupuy, Commissioner Sean Garcia-Leys,  
                  Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Commissioner Dominique D. Nong,  
                  Commissioner Robert M. Saltzman, Commissioner Cyn Yamashiro, Secretary  
                  Dolores Canales, Vice Chair Esché L. Jackson

Absent:         Commissioner Franky Carrillo

2. Approval of the September 23, 2021 meeting minutes.

**No members of the public commented on this item.**

**On motion of by Commissioner Saltzman, seconded by Commissioner Yamashiro, and unanimously carried, the Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission approved the September 23, 2021 minutes:**

**Ayes:**         **7 –**     Commissioner Sean Garcia-Leys, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Commissioner Dominique D. Nong, Commissioner Robert M. Saltzman, Commissioner Cyn Yamashiro, Secretary Dolores Canales, Vice Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Absent:**       **2 –**     Commissioner Danielle M. Dupuy, Chairman Franky Carrillo

Attachments:    [Supporting Document](#)  
                          [Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

**II.     DISCUSSION**

3. Discuss and take appropriate action on a report and update from the Los Angeles County Probation Department on the implementation of the plan to phase out the use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray and the progress in reaching compliance with the suitability requirements of the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC).

- Adam Bettino, Chief Deputy, Los Angeles County Probation Department
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Mr. Bettino shared that one cohort of staff completed training, and the next cohort began training. The Probation Department will be consulting with labor to address some safety concerns raised during the training. Mr. Bettino emphasized that new recruits are given OC Spray, but are being trained to utilize alternate de-escalation techniques to resolve conflicts. He suggested that trainees be provided with additional tools over time and incorporate a continuing education component. Mr. Bettino introduced and welcomed Chief Deputy Karen Fletcher.

Ms. Fletcher provided updates related to the BSCC findings of unsuitability. She mentioned that the Probation Department has been working diligently with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) to modify the electronic medical record system and Probation staff to improve confinement and restraint concerns. Ms. Fletcher further added that the Probation Department has been collaborating with the BSCC to employ sustainable modifications.

Zoe Rawson, Oscar Canales, and James Maddox addressed the POC.

Commissioner Dupuy joined the meeting at 9:24 a.m.

Mr. Bettino responded to Commissioner Jackson's inquiry about expanding internal controls in preparation for routine compliance requirements. He mentioned that there is an existing Title 15 team, and an overview of Title 15 is part of the training curriculum. Commissioner Jackson also asked who is on the compliance team and what their specific roles were in the development of compliance measures within the department. Mr. Bettino explained that there are quality assurance teams where staff are dedicated to reviewing documentation, data, and reports to ensure the Probation Department meets the standards within various categories. He added that the Probation Department is working on improving their ongoing monitoring tools for quality assurance. Lastly, Mr. Bettino shared that staff are concerned about the BSCC suitability findings, so he and Ms. Fletcher are speaking with staff to ensure they understand the practicalities of Title 15.

Commissioner Saltzman asked if the Probation Department has been analyzing the OC Spray data to identify overarching trends and usages sorted by location. Mr. Bettino mentioned that based on the daily notifications he receives, there has been an increase in the use of OC Spray. He emphasized that there is concern about the increased fighting among youth, where staff feel it is safer to deploy OC Spray. Mr. Bettino shared that the Probation Department is working towards developing an automated tool to document use of force incidents to generate more meaningful data.

Commissioner Garcia-Leys asked to see the training curriculum including lesson plans, handouts, and slide shows. Mr. Bettino agreed. Mr. Bettino clarified that there is not a formal pre- and post- training assessment or evaluation for these trainings, but the attendees are asked an array of questions about the instructors and the training content.

Commissioner Meredith commented that there is a lack of communication from upper management to some line staff on policies and procedures. Commissioner Meredith expressed concerns about the Probation Department's response to reports of maggots in the youth's food and inquired about process for enhancing the periodic food inspection process or contracting with a different vendor. Lastly, Commissioner Meredith clarified that the Probation Department should be looking for patterns or practice to analyze OC Spray usage and render additional oversight.

Commissioner Canales asked about the Probation Department investing more funds into programming and health services (such as mental health) that would be beneficial for the youth as opposed to focusing on investing in staff trainings. Mr. Bettino concurred that this suggestion will be investigated to minimize the amount of idle time that youth have, but the current focus is restructuring the environment of the camps and halls to create a more home-like environment. Commissioner Canales asked Ms. Fletcher about the types of repairs being discussed with the BSCC. Ms. Fletcher stated that the BSCC will focus on the exact regulatory items that are not compliant first, which deemed the facilities unsuitable, and then take other factors into consideration thereafter.

Commissioner Nong asked clarifying questions for distinguishing the types of incidents resulting in deployment of OC Spray. Mr. Bettino explained that an assault on a minor is when the attack is one-sided, whereas a fight is two or more youth attacking each other. He was unable to distinguish a behavioral disturbance from a fight, but explained that out-of-control behavior, as opposed to other categories such as property damage, is when a child is continually refusing to follow instructions over an extended period. Commissioner Nong recommended that the Probation Department follow up on items such as using OC Spray in minors' rooms, ongoing food quality, pre- and post-surveys for the training courses, and conducting analyses to determine the underlying reasons for the fights. Mr. Bettino mentioned that one obstacle the Probation Department is encountering is the bidding process to contract with other County agencies and community-based organizations to implement various programming. He stated that the POC can aid in these efforts by facilitating conversations with the Board and identifying credible agencies.

Commissioner Dupuy emphasized that physical and cultural environments can encourage or discourage violence among youth, and that programming should be prioritized. Furthermore, as more home-like environments are created for the youth, she stated that the staff working in the facilities matter because they build relationships with the youth. As hiring processes are revamped, Commissioner Dupuy recommended that the Probation Department consider a holistic approach of candidates with higher education as well as those with lived experience in communities being served. Mr. Bettino responded by stating that the Probation Department is considering retention when recruiting.

Commissioner Jackson shared her concerns about the kitchen at Central Juvenile Hall (CJH) and Mr. Bettino confirmed that the Probation Department will follow-up. Commissioner Jackson elaborated on her observations at CJH. Mr. Bettino mentioned that placement of youth at CJH after being housed elsewhere is determined by the facility. However, he responded to her initial inquiry by explaining that work orders are supposed to be handled by immediately reporting an issue and following up on the work order until the issue is resolved because there are several protocols, especially with funding to pay for some of the work orders, that must be administratively followed. In order obtain updates on how youth are assigned to CJH, Mr. Bettino suggested contacting Director Alex Nieto, Deputy Director Dalila Alcantara, or Bureau Chief Mark Garcia. Commissioner Jackson raised an additional concern that youth at CJH are dealing with mental health challenges, but the physical environment they are in is not conducive to their needs. Mr. Bettino emphasized that the care units are for youth who need more supervision. Lastly, Commissioner Jackson shared how the CJH living conditions are pristine for the boys in contrast to that of girls.

Ms. Julien clarified the purpose of facility inspections conducted by the Probation Oversight Commission (POC). She stated that California law requires the POC Commissioners to conduct annual facility inspections of each operating hall and camp.

**Ms. Julien emphasized that the annual facility inspections are unrelated to the current findings of unsuitability by the BSCC. She mentioned that these facility inspection reports submitted to the BSCC will be available to the public and complete by December 31, 2021.**

**Attachments:** [Supporting Document](#)  
[Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

4. Discuss and take appropriate action on a presentation by the Probation Oversight Commission on the Probation Department's grievance and complaint processes and a presentation by the Probation Department on its Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) procedural protocols.
  - Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Probation Oversight Commission
  - Jennifer Ochoa-Garcia, Management Analyst, Probation Oversight Commission
  - Adam Bettino, Chief Deputy, Los Angeles County Probation Department
  - Nathan Martinez, Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department
  - Jose Villar, Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department
  - Taneka Shehee, Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department
  - Eric Bates, Assistant Inspector General, Los Angeles County Office of the Inspector General

**Ms. Julien stressed how important the Grievance and Complaint Report is to the Board of Supervisors, the Probation Department, PRIT, and the Probation Oversight Commission. She explained that the ordinance requires the POC to collaborate with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to create an external grievance and complaint procedure for the Probation Department that would be investigated by a neutral entity. The POC's first step is to analyze the current policies and procedures for grievances and complaints. The POC staff met with a number of Probation Staff, made personal observations, and spoke to youth and toured facilities with the grievance process in mind. Ms. Julien highlighted that youth incarcerated in halls and camps are in many ways normal teenagers with the same needs as other teenagers in Los Angeles County, but they live in very abnormal, difficult environments that are not conducive to brain development, maturation, and rehabilitation. This makes the grievance and complaint process crucial and challenging. Ms. Julien emphasized that the goal is to have a strong tracking process to ensure that youth can submit complaints and grievances safely and easily without fear of retribution. She concluded by stating that the best resource for improving the process is to listen to the recommendations of those who are affected by it.**

**Ms. Ochoa-Garcia gave a presentation on the Probation Department's current grievance and complaint processes report. In the attached report, she highlighted the differences between a complaint and a grievance and explained how they both are submitted and processed.**

**Mr. Martinez is the Probation Department's PREA Coordinator responsible for supporting the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment within institutions or correctional systems. He mentioned that PREA is about compliance and best practices required to ensure an increase in safety and security of youth within institutions. Mr. Martinez added that Just Detention International, a nonprofit human rights organization, received a grant to support the Probation Department's policies and training programs as well as facilitate collaborative meetings. He reiterated that while the grievance process is being revised, the Probation Department has been able to incorporate safeguards within each uniquely identified event.**

Mr. Villar mentioned that the grievance policies are being updated to incorporate the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) recommendations, establish a written verbal grievance policy, and document resolution progress. Mr. Villar shared additional ways in which youth can file grievances including Kiosks, with a targeted full implementation by April 2023. Ms. Julien added that the current grievance boxes and the posters for the Ombudsperson's Office are prominently displayed in the collective area where youth congregate.

Ms. Shehee explained that the Ombudsperson's Office receive calls from a diverse audience including group homes, camps, halls, the community, and others as they seek resolution. Although resolution may involve forwarding the grievance or complaint to another entity, the Placement Quality Assurance Bureaus make sure that all matters are handled. Mr. Norberto Zaragoza from Internal Affairs reinforced that many of the referrals are either from the community or from the institutions via phone, online, or by mail.

Ms. Julien reiterated the importance of streamlining the grievance and complaints processes. Unfortunately, the POC and the OIG do not have staff to conduct investigations, but a few unsolicited grievances and complaints have been addressed and forwarded to the Probation Department to seek resolution where appropriate.

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Chair Carrillo being absent), the Probation Oversight Commission accepted Ms. Ochoa-Garcia, Mr. Martinez, Mr. Villar, Ms. Shehee, and Mr. Zaragoza's report.

Damon Ayala, Oscar Canales, Roxana Aguilar, Ambrose Brooks, Zoe Rawson, Miguel Casar, and Kruti Parekh addressed the POC.

Ms. Julien addressed some of the concerns raised by the public commenters. She emphasized that the role of the POC is to bring transparency into the Probation Department, reduce the risk of retaliation, and analyze trends around complaints and grievances to develop recommendations.

Ms. Shehee elaborated on how the Office of the Ombudsperson handles family complaints and grievances. She stated that the Ombudsperson conducts wellness checks and relay any updates to the parents and guardians.

Mr. Martinez explained how vulnerable youth are safeguarded. He stated that a risk assessment is used to screen the youth to determine if a Specialized Supervision Plan (SSP) is needed. Once this series of assessments are completed, a SSP is generated identifying the youth as vulnerable to victimization, sexually aggressive behavior, or both, then the staff is alerted so they are sensitive to the youth's vulnerabilities. He further explained the frequency that youth get screened using the variety of PREA and BSCC questions to properly address the needs of the youth as they come into the institutions.

Commissioner Jackson asked Probation Department representatives for feedback on the effectiveness of the grievance and complaints processes and how concerns of youth and families are being addressed because youth are not always comfortable submitting grievances. Mr. Villar responded that the Probation Department responds to grievances within 72 hours and aims to resolve them within ten days as mandated by Title 15. He stated that the JIGS data is a way to generate more data to evaluate how youth are feeling and how they are being treated, which can ultimately measure effectiveness of facilities.

Commissioner Canales acknowledged the effective grievance tracking system that the Probation Department has in place. She asked whether a copy of the grievances filed against an employee is kept in their personnel file and what happens once that employee receives numerous complaints. Mr. Villar clarified that this level of grievance tracking has yet to be implemented, but all staff grievances are addressed immediately. Ms. Julien pointed out that there is a link in the attached report that identifies which types of complaints or incidents, per policy, that must be referred to Internal Affairs, which is where an evaluation of the compiled grievances against individual staff members. Mr. Villar added that the immediate concern is the safety of the youth while the investigating is concurrently being conducted.

Commissioner Canales also inquired about the statistical data for PREA reporting to determine if the Probation Department receives a large amount of PREA grievances. Mr. Martinez stated that PREA cases are tracked individually using a Survey for Sexual Violence (SSV) to generate general demographics of the incident. This is to ensure that the PREA compliance requirements are being addressed. Mr. Martinez expounded on the scope of the various grievances he receives, emphasizing that each case is managed individually.

Commissioner Jackson inquired if the Probation Department compiled data to analyze any trends within the department collectively. Mr. Villar mentioned that the current grievance tracking system is very limited right now, but the Probation Department is hoping to conduct deeper analyses once the online automated system is implemented. Ms. Shehee expressed that trends are tracked in the Office of the Ombudsperson and communicated during their quarterly PROBESTAT meetings to effectively resolve compiled grievances. In response to Commissioner Jackson's inquiry of identifying the Grievance Officer at CJH, Ms. Julien reported that the POC met with the Grievance Officers from each of the halls and camps.

To clarify Commissioner Jackson's inquiry about Other Conducts of Concern (OCOC) Grievances, Ms. Reynoso explained that OCOC grievances are complaints that are not considered abuse, not requiring a SCAR report, but may include concerns related to gangs or other issues within the facilities. She further added that OCOC grievances are prepared and submitted directly to the investigative body of the Probation Department and they follow-up with the reporting part.

Mr. Villar responded to Commissioner Garcia-Leys' question by stating that in the first quarter of 2021, the Probation Department had between 47-64 grievances from the camps and approximately 29-106 grievances total for the halls. Ms. Shehee reported that the Office of the Ombudsperson for 2020 there approximately 300 calls, but exact data can be extracted. Mr. Bates clarified that there was a low number of about three to four cases received by OIG and Ms. Julien shared that the POC has seen six, which may be attributable to that fact that the POC and OIG do not have the staffing capacity to process them and have not publicly announced they are receiving or reviewing grievances. Mr. Martinez reported that there were approximately 20 PREA grievances filed this year related to sexual misconduct within the facilities, but only about one to two substantiated.

Commissioner Garcia-Leys asked there were any organizations or youth advocates who advocate for youth by filing grievances on their behalf. Ms. Julien confirmed that there are, and they include the Ombudsperson's office which acts as a neutral party outside of the facilities who advocates on behalf of the youth. Additionally, Ms. Julien listed nonprofit organizations such as Arts for Healing and Justice Network, Los Angeles County Office of

Education (LACOE) Counselors and Principals, among others. Ms. Shehee emphasized that when youth call the Office of the Ombudsperson, they are encouraged to advocate for themselves or seek assistance from someone that they trust and feel comfortable with.

Lastly, Commissioner Garcia-Leys inquired about other duties that Grievance Officers have concurrent with their role as a Grievance Officer that may inhibit their ability to resolve grievances objectively. Ms. Reynoso stated that Grievance Officers tend to wear many hats while working their full-time assignments. She further added that there is a level of neutrality, but she also mentioned that the high turnover rates of Grievance Officers may affect their neutrality perspectives.

Ms. Julien concurred with Commissioner Saltzman that the recommended next steps would be to collaborate with the Probation Department to draft a set of recommendations to improve the existing processes and acknowledge that some changes may address policy issues, but also address issues that are not resolved by policy changes such as cultural changes and fear of retaliation.

Commissioner Dupuy asked if there would be an indicator of timeliness that is captured in the planned data system. Mr. Villar explained that this data will be tracked, and reports will be submitted to management indicating when grievances are approaching their deadlines.

Commissioner Nong inquired about the logistics of a formal hearing. Mr. Villar explained the formal grievance process, indicating who makes the final decisions. He further confirmed that the youth, supervisor, and the youth has the option to bring another person to the hearing as well. Mr. Villar stated that there are formalities in place to document the resolution of the hearing as well as who was in attendance.

Commissioner Saltzman moved that the POC instruct the POC staff to work with Probation staff to return to the POC with recommendations regarding policies and procedures for grievances and complaints. This report should include, but not be limited to, the following: 1) evaluation of changes already underway; 2) new issues and concerns to be considered; and 3) routine and regular provision of data to the POC regarding grievances and complaints.

On motion of by Commissioner Saltzman, seconded by Commissioner Dupuy, and unanimously carried (with Commissioner Carrillo being absent), the Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission approved the motion:

**Ayes:**           8 –     Commissioner Danielle M. Dupuy, Commissioner Sean Garcia-Leys, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Commissioner Dominique D. Nong, Commissioner Robert M. Saltzman, Commissioner Cyn Yamashiro, Secretary Dolores Canales, Vice Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Absent:**           1 –     Chairman Franky Carrillo

**Attachments:**   [Supporting Document](#)  
                          [Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Chair Carrillo being absent), the POC recessed at 12:10 p.m.

**The meeting reconvened at 12:25 p.m.**

5. Discuss and take appropriate action on an update on the programming model and site selection for Secure Youth Track Facilities (SYTF) related to the closure of the State of California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).
  - Adam Bettino, Chief Deputy, Los Angeles County Probation Department
  - Members of the JJCC-JJRBG Subcommittee

**Ms. Julien encouraged everyone to attend the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council-Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJCC-JJRBG) Subcommittee meeting on Friday, October 15, 2021.**

**Mr. Bettino reiterated that the JJCC-JJRBG Subcommittee must submit a plan by January 1, 2022 highlighting how funds will be spent, identifying funding sources, and establishing a robust program, including educational and vocational training, for the youth. He reported that there are currently ten SYTF youth but will be an estimated twelve beginning November 2021. Mr. Bettino also reported that approximately 50 youth are pending adjudication. Essentially, the Probation Department does not want to expend lots of money and resources on the intermediate phase so that a greater and more effective program can be designed. He explained the purpose of the scorecard and how it would be used to determine the feasibility using a standardized scorecard, but not all of the criteria is weighted the same and the report does not consider population consolidation. Mr. Bettino emphasized how the subcommittee would like to have more community engagement opportunities where the importance of this initiative is being effectively communicated with the community and youth. Mr. Bettino concluded that the JJCC-JJRBG Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, but the ultimate decision will be decided by the Board of Supervisors.**

**Roxana Aguilar addressed the POC.**

**Ms. Julien reiterated that the POC has been collaborating with the Probation Department to foster community engagement, both broad and focused in specific geographic areas. The POC has requested a list of the current programs and services currently being offered in the camps and halls, and Ms. Julien confirmed that the POC will share that information once it becomes available. Once Commissioner Garcia-Leys obtains information on how to get community-based organizations approved to render services to the youth as it becomes available also. Mr. Bettino shared that the Probation Department has established partnerships with larger organizations who will hire their young people, and are looking to expand that network.**

**Commissioner Yamashiro asked about the specific programming that will be made available to SYTF youth because this population will need treatment with experts. Mr. Bettino specified that there is currently no programming being implemented for the SYTF youth despite the amount of time the Probation Department has been apprised of this transition date approaching. He added that the Probation Department has been collaborating with Mr. Clinton Lacey to implement the Credible Messenger program as a framework to building a therapeutic model for the youth.**

**Commissioner Yamashiro inquired about a timeline for hiring and training staff who will be interacting with the SYTF population who would need specific types of treatment. Mr.**



Bettino stated that staffing is predicated on labor discussions. He added that special mechanisms, such as specialized recruitment, are being considered for those positions. Mr. Bettino mentioned that the Probation Department is researching other county departments to build their foundational framework.

Commissioner Meredith stressed the importance of community outreach to explain the goals and public safety issues. He also commented on the need to ensure that proper programming is in place now to address the needs of the SYTF population. Lastly, Commissioner Meredith added that vocational training will be an important part of the SYTF programming, but it requires partnerships and collaborations with various corporations, organizations, and colleges.

Commissioner Nong inquired if the site selection for youth on the secure track will be grounded on the Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR) principles. Mr. Bettino stated that the Probation Department will be weighing the impact of programming itself, along with the space or environment they will be dwelling in, ensuring it is conducive to the YJR.

Attachments: [Supporting Document](#)  
[Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

### III. REPORT

6. Report from the Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission's Programs and Services Ad Hoc Committee on its observations of the educational programs and services being offered in the juvenile camps and halls within the Probation Department by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

Commissioner Garcia-Leys explained that one of the goals of the Programs and Services Ad Hoc Committee is to observe a series of educational programs in the halls and camps and compose a written report for the public. He stated that the initial draft of the education report has been completed, but the findings and recommendations are being refined. Ms. Julien added that the POC is planning to discuss the education report in a special meeting.

No members of the public commented on this item.

Attachments: [Supporting Document](#)  
[Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

### IV. MISCELLANEOUS

#### MATTERS NOT POSTED

7. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested), placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the authority, of matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda.

*(Not on agenda)*

Ms. Julien announced that the next POC meeting is on Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. The POC will have Monday meetings for November and December and return to the monthly Thursday date beginning in January 2022. She also mentioned that the POC will be having town halls to address Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTF) selection and education.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

8. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission (POC) on items of interest that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the POC.

You may submit public comment by e-mail to [info@poc.lacounty.gov](mailto:info@poc.lacounty.gov).

Written public comment or documentation must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled meeting. Please include the Agenda Item and meeting date in your correspondence. Correspondence received shall become part of the official record.

**Edith Macias addressed the POC by submitting written public comment.**

**Kruti Parekh, Jael Ovalle, Gloria Gonzalez, Leah Gasser-Ordaz, Ambrose Brooks, Zoe Rawson, and Mainor Xuncax addressed the POC.**

**Commissioner Nong proposed that the Citation Diversion Program be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.**

**Attachments:** [Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

9. Adjournment for the regular meeting of October 14, 2021.

**Vice Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.**