



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



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

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023, 12:00 P.M.**

VIDEO FILE FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING

**Attachment:**    [Video](#)

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

**Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Ms. Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, conducted the roll call:**

Present:                    Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo,  
                                  Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith,  
                                  Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and  
                                  Chair Esché L. Jackson

2. Approval of the February 9, 2023, meeting minutes.

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

**On motion of Commissioner Kakani, seconded by Commissioner Carrillo, unanimously carried (Commissioner Lewis being absent), the Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission (POC) approved the February 9, 2023, meeting minutes:**

**Ayes:**                    **6 –**    Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Absent:**                **1 –**    Commissioner Samuel Lewis

**Attachments:**    [Approved February 9, 2023, Minutes](#)  
Public Comment/Correspondence

**II. DISCUSSIONS**

3. Discuss and take appropriate action on the oversight plans to ensure that the rights of incarcerated youth are safeguarded with the implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 2417 – Youth Bill of Rights.

- Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission
  - Elizabeth Braunstein, Deputy Public Defender, Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office
  - Laura Ridolfi, Racial Justice and Well-Being Strategist, W. Haywood Burns Institute
-

Ms. Braunstein and Ms. Ridolfi gave a presentation on *AB 2417: A Bill of Rights for Incarcerated Youth*, which has been attached.

Commissioner Lewis joined the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Elida Ledesma addressed the POC.

Ms. Ridolfi and Ms. Braunstein shared that the law does not require staff to be trained on the Youth Bill of Rights or AB 2417. Ms. Ridolfi added that the Office of the Ombudsman in the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) are great resources for obtaining training and technical assistance with grievances. Ms. Braunstein emphasized the zero tolerance for retaliation outlined in the Youth Bill of Rights.

Commissioner Canales expressed her sentiments on the need to clearly outline youth's access to necessities in the Youth's Bill of Rights for implementation in the facilities.

Chair Jackson emphasized the importance of educating youth and their families on their rights, and the need to empower youth to act on their own and report mistreatments.

Commissioner Kakani inquired about how the OYCR's Ombudsman interacts and communicates with internal grievance processes at the local level. Ms. Ridolfi mentioned that the goal is to have local grievances forwarded to the OYCR's Ombudsman and have ongoing communication on how to address the grievances.

Commissioner Kakani further inquired about the Probation Department's grievance process and if grievances are forwarded to the OYCR's Ombudsman.

Ms. Karen Fletcher, Chief Deputy for the Los Angeles County Probation Department, explained how the Probation Department handles grievances which includes the posting and distribution of infographics, collection and review of written grievances (paper process), and utilization of an automated grievance system using iPads (electronic process). She added that each facility has grievance officers who handle those grievances, but she will report back on how the grievance officers determine where to send those grievances. Ms. Fletcher stated that the Probation Department has been in communication with the OYCR's Ombudsman to ensure AB 2417 compliance.

In response to Commissioner Kakani's inquiry about how other jurisdictions are handling grievances and complaints, Ms. Ridolfi explained that this process is new state-wide, but best practices can be developed in Los Angeles County. She mentioned that there is nothing precluding the development of a local policy to make sure that every grievance falls under AB 2417 and is forwarded to the OYCR's Ombudsman. Ms. Braunstein emphasized the importance of anonymity under AB2417 so that youth feel free from retaliation.

Commissioner Garcia-Leys shared his sentiments from a youth's perspective on filing complaints and grievances and distinguishing the levels of violations (what is expected to happen from what is unacceptable).

Ms. Julien explained that the POC's role in advising about the grievance procedure and AB 2417 is to have a team of staff create an external grievance procedure, receive and review incoming grievances, and then partner with the Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate those grievances but those positions within the POC and OIG have not been funded. She added that the POC will be incorporating the components of the Youth Bill of Rights into future inspection reports including the review of the existing grievance processes.

In response to Commissioner Lewis' question about the average number of grievances received by the Probation Department, Ms. Fletcher mentioned that the average at Central Juvenile Hall (CJH) is 40 and the average at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJNJH) is 60.

Commissioner Lewis and Chair Jackson shared sentiments that the culture within the Probation Department discourages people from filing grievances and complaints due to a fear of retaliation.

Chair Jackson inquired about mechanisms that the Probation Department can use to address cultural misunderstandings. Ms. Fletcher explained that the Ombudsman and Commissioners can go into the units and talk directly with youth, recommending staff to encourage youth to use the grievance process, and town hall meetings with Probation Staff to talk to youth about their rights.

In response to Chair Jackson's inquiry about the status of youth councils, Ms. Fletcher stated that she will verify the details on the youth council meetings but have observed some meetings taking place recently at BJNJH and CJH.

Commissioner Lewis inquired about monthly verifying the number of filed grievances and reviewing the documentation. Ms. Fletcher responded by stating that the POC has access to review the grievance logs when requested, which are kept by the Grievance Officers who are assigned under the Compliance and Evaluation Unit.

Commissioner Canales stressed the importance of bringing training to the youth facilities to inform the youth's understanding of the grievance processes.

Commissioner Carrillo shared his sentiments on youth's human rights being violated by Probation Officers and expressed the need to review retroactive grievances.

Ms. Julien explained that the POC is responsible for surveying and interviewing youth to gain their responses on the implementation of the Youth Bill of Rights with support from the defense counsel within Los Angeles County.

**Attachments:** [Board Motion](#)  
[Supporting Documents](#)  
Public Comment/Correspondence

4. Discuss and take appropriate action on substance use in facilities including the impact on clients, available treatment options, best practices for programs and treatment options, and Narcan accessibility.
  - Dr. Erica Reynoso, Ph.D., LCSW, Project Director, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission

- Karen Fletcher, Chief Deputy, Los Angeles County Probation Department
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Substance Abuse Prevention and Control)
- Dr. Rachel Castañeda, Professor and Addiction Research Psychologist, Azusa Pacific University

**Dr. Reynoso provided background on the need to discuss substance use in juvenile facilities based on reports from youth. She shared that a substance use symposium will be planned later this year.**

**Dr. Castañeda gave a presentation on *Youth Substance Use: Considerations*, which has been attached.**

**Dr. Karen Streich and Dr. Hanumantha Damerla from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) gave an overview of the treatment and programs currently being offered in the juvenile halls and camps.**

**Dr. Streich described the processes for the comprehensive juvenile justice assessment and substance use assessment and how treatment plans are developed.**

**Dr. Damerla emphasized the need to treat mental health and substance use simultaneously to address the trauma and explained the different types of intervention and treatment methods. He added that the DMH is preparing training plans for staff so that when Naloxone (commonly known as Narcan) is procured, the staff have a better handle on its distribution in lifesaving instances in juvenile camps and halls.**

**Dr. David Oh, Medical Director with the Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS), confirmed that JCHS staff have Narcan at the facilities but there is a need to ensure there is supply on-hand for Probation staff in case of an emergency. The Department is using the train-the-trainer model to train staff on use.**

**Ms. Elizabeth Norris-Walczak from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) gave a presentation on *Substance Use Treatment Services for In-Custody and Probation Youth*, which has been attached.**

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

**Commissioner Carrillo inquired about each organization's relationship with the Probation Department and how the collaborative processes are going.**

**Dr. Streich mentioned that DMH has clinicians in each of the facilities and has not had any issues with getting clinicians in to do the work seven days per week.**

**Ms. Valerie Sifuentes, Youth Services-Juvenile Justice Unit Manager for DPH, explained that more education will be provided to the Probation Department to educate employees on the role of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) within juvenile institutions. She added that SAPC's access to space is limited space at the facilities, but they are working with Probation on a rolling basis.**

Dr. Castañeda shared that education on youth substance use would be integrated into the upcoming symposium.

Chair Jackson asked how these programs can be integrated into the facilities and what the foreseeable challenges are. Ms. Valerie Van Kirk, Bureau Chief for the Los Angeles County Probation Department, explained that the Probation Department is trying to build a more robust program for substance abuse challenges by looking to dedicate spacing for these programs and services to be successfully implemented.

In response to Chair Jackson's inquiry about clarifying the meaning of space, Ms. Sifuentes explained that there are interview rooms, but they are often occupied. She emphasized the need for both interview space, office space, and eventually group space at BJNH and CJH that allows for confidential assessments.

Ms. Fletcher and Mr. Bettino added that many buildings are under construction but there is coordination with the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department to maximize space during the renovations.

Commissioner Meredith inquired about what happens when clinicians or doctors see a person under the influence while onsite. Dr. Oh stated that medical staff are contacted so an assessment can be conducted immediately for treatment options.

In response to Commissioner Meredith's inquiry about how overdoses are handled by the Probation Department, Ms. Fletcher mentioned that there have not been any reported overdoses or Narcan administration to date.

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

5. Discuss and take appropriate action on a statement in response to the Los Angeles Times Newspaper article published on February 11, 2023, reporting on "video [showing] use of force on teen".
  - Esché Jackson, Commission Chair, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission

Commissioner Canales gave a disclaimer and apology if the sharing of the video is traumatizing or triggering to viewers. She mentioned that if support is needed to process or discuss the distressing contents of the video, community healer Kruti Parekh has offered her services, and can be contacted at [kruti222@yahoo.com](mailto:kruti222@yahoo.com).

Chair Jackson read the POC's statement in response to the article which is attached and explained that a deeper dive on this topic will take place at a future meeting.

Aditi Sherikar, Heather Moore, Ivette Ale-Ferlito, James Maddox, Bryanna Siguenza, Thomas Bell, Ambrose Brooks, Gloria Gonzalez, Titilayo, Zoe Rawson, Leah Zeigler-Ordaz, Laura C., Kent Mendoza, Kruti Parekh, Miguel Casar, Stacy Ford, Mel Bailey, Megan Castillo, and Varden Phan addressed the POC.

Commissioner Meredith explained that state law outlines certification requirements for peace officers and explains discipline when peace officers use excessive force, staff trying to acquiesce, and the need to rehabilitate youth.

Commissioner Canales expressed her concerns with the systemic problem within the Probation Department that is affecting the department's culture.

Commissioner Canales proposed a motion, seconded by Commissioner Carrillo, recommending the resignation of Chief Adolfo Gonzales and the immediate termination of Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO) Oscar Cross.

Commissioner Carrillo made a friendly amendment to add that all the adults in the video also be removed or terminated.

Chair Jackson made a friendly amendment to request all the documentation that led to Chief Gonzales' decision to keep SDPO Cross employed.

Commissioner Meredith mentioned that there are several government codes, and possibly labor laws and contract issues that may prevent the POC from receiving all documentation leading up to Chief Gonzales' decision to retain SDPO Cross.

In response to Ms. Julien's inquiry about the Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) requests for information in this case, Assistant Inspector General Eric Bates confirmed that OIG has made several requests for information from the Probation Department to aid in this investigation.

Commissioner Kakani shared her sentiments on the lack of urgency, acknowledgement, apology, admission, or remorse from the Probation Department for the child abuse that happened in the video.

Commissioner Garcia-Leys provided additional examples to support the recommendation that Chief Gonzales resign, and posed questions as to what the next steps would be, and Commissioner Meredith concurred with his statements.

Commissioner Meredith recommended that Chief Gonzales be invited to hear the motion.

On motion of Commissioner Canales, seconded by Commissioner Carrillo, duly carried by the following vote, the POC agreed to recommend the resignation of Chief Adolfo Gonzales, the immediate termination of SDPO Cross and the others in the video, and requested background documentation that led to Chief Gonzales' decision to retain SDPO Cross:

<b>Ayes:</b>	<b>5 –</b>	Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson
<b>Noes:</b>	<b>2 –</b>	Commissioner Donald D. Meredith and Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys

Commissioner Lewis proposed a motion, seconded by Commissioner Canales, calling for the termination of Chief Deputy Karen Fletcher.

Commissioners Lewis and Canales shared their sentiments on why Ms. Fletcher should be terminated.

Commissioner Meredith reiterated that the POC can only make these recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to consider these motions.

Chair Jackson stressed the importance of understanding who makes the decisions behind the scenes and how decisions are being made.

Commissioner Lewis reiterated his sentiments on the Probation Department's lack of accountability.

On motion of Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Canales, unanimously carried, the POC agreed the POC agreed to recommend the termination of Chief Deputy Karen Fletcher:

**Ayes:** 7 – Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

In response to Chair Jackson's request for background information, Ms. Julien explained that if the information requested cannot be reviewed by the POC, then the POC will ask the OIG to investigate further and provide a report back to the full body.

On motion by Chair Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Garcia-Leys, and unanimously carried, the POC agreed to table discussion and action on the POC's statement regarding the LA Times article to a future meeting:

**Ayes:** 7 – Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Attachments:** [Article/Media](#)  
[POC Statement regarding LA Times Article](#)  
[Public Comment/Correspondence](#)

6. Discuss and take appropriate action on the Los Angeles County Probation Department's involvement with auctioning firearms.

- Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission

On motion by Chair Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Garcia-Leys, and unanimously carried, the POC agreed to table discussion and action on agenda item 6 to a future meeting:

**Ayes:** 7 – Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Attachments:** [Board Motion](#)  
[Article/Media](#)  
[Motion](#)  
Public Comment/Correspondence

7. Discuss and take appropriate action a proposed plan for the secure youth treatment facilities (SYTF), an update on the movement of youth to Campus Kilpatrick, and implementation of programs and policies at both Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJNJH) and Campus Kilpatrick.
- Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission
  - Franky Carrillo, Commissioner, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission
  - Adam Bettino, Chief Deputy, Los Angeles County Probation Department

**On motion by Chair Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Canales, and unanimously carried, the POC agreed to table agenda item 7 and agenda item 8 for discussion at a future meeting.**

**Ayes:**           7 –     Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

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

8. Discuss and take appropriate action on the Los Angeles County Probation Department's progress on compliance with the December 20, 2022, motion of the Board of Supervisors requiring the phase out of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray in units housing youth with developmental disabilities, girls, and gender-expansive youth at Central Juvenile Hall as well as full phase out plans.
- Dr. Sarah Gongora, Psy.D., Project Director, Los Angeles Probation Oversight Commission

**On motion by Chair Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Canales, and unanimously carried, the POC agreed to table agenda item 7 and agenda item 8 for discussion at a future meeting.**

**Ayes:**           7 –     Commissioner Dolores Canales, Commissioner Franky Carrillo, Commissioner Samuel Lewis, Commissioner Donald D. Meredith, Secretary Sean Garcia-Leys, Vice-Chair Milinda Kakani, and Chair Esché L. Jackson

**Attachments:** [Board Motion](#)  
[POC & OIG Report Backs](#)  
[OC Spray Elimination – Quarterly Report](#)  
[OC Spray Elimination – POC Updates](#)  
[OC Spray Deployment Reports](#)  
Public Comment/Correspondence



### **III. MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **MATTERS NOT POSTED**

9. 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.

**Chair Jackson confirmed that Dr. Diane Terry and Mr. Eduardo Mundo were confirmed to appear on the Board's February 28<sup>th</sup> agenda for appointment.**

**Chair Jackson and Ms. Julien welcomed Belinda Mellado to the POC as the Community Services Coordinator.**

**Commissioner Lewis requested that discussion around the Probation Department's visitor policies be agendized for a future meeting.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

10. 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. one business day before the scheduled meeting to be included on the agenda. Please include the Agenda Item(s) and meeting date in your correspondence. Correspondence received by 5:00 p.m. the same day of the meeting shall become part of the official record.

**Thomas Bell, James Maddox, Miguel Casar, Krista Newble, and Mel Bailey addressed the POC.**

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

### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

9. Adjournment for the regular meeting of February 23, 2023.

**Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 3:41 p.m.**