

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

March 7, 2023

**Deputy Gangs: Support for the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission’s Recommendations to Eradicate Deputy Gangs in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department**

As a result of a Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) motion in September 2021, “Measures to Eradicate Deputy Gangs and Create Stronger Civilian Oversight and Checks and Balances over the Sheriff and Sheriff’s Department”<sup>1</sup>, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) and its Deputy Gang ad-hoc committee hosted seven special hearings, including the hiring of a special counsel, to hear testimony about the impact that deputy gangs has inside and outside of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD). A culmination of those testimonies, history into deputy gangs, and recommendations have been compiled in the COC’s report, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Counsel to Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Regarding Deputy Gangs and Deputy Cliques in the Los

<sup>1</sup> <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/162339.pdf>

MOTION

SOLIS	_____
MITCHELL	_____
HORVATH	_____
BARGER	_____
HAHN	_____

Angeles County Sheriff's Department"<sup>2</sup> that was issued on Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

For over 50 years, LASD has been plagued with deputy gangs and it continues to be a disease that infiltrates the workforce and erodes trust with community. There is also significant fiscal damage through lawsuits, paid by taxpayers, that are filed against LASD for allegations of deputy gangs engaging in misconduct, harming, and killing of residents.

This report is one of several that have been issued over the decades about how much damage the existence and enablement of deputy gangs has within LASD— low staff morale and bullying, harassment, and retaliation against other deputies. It has also caused tremendous distrust from community and soiled the reputation of the Department.

The COC's report puts forward 27 recommendations to remove deputy gangs and discourage gang- and clique-like behavior, which are:

1. The Sheriff must clearly, promptly, and unequivocally articulate his vision, policies, and objectives in addressing the problem of deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
2. The Sheriff should adopt a policy that clearly prohibits deputies from participating in deputy gangs, as defined in Penal Code Section 13670.
3. The Sheriff should adopt a policy that clearly prohibits deputies from joining, participating in, and soliciting others to join deputy cliques.

---

2

[http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/commissionpublications/report/1138014\\_DeputyGangsSpecialCounselReporttoCOC3.2.2023.PDF.PDF](http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/commissionpublications/report/1138014_DeputyGangsSpecialCounselReporttoCOC3.2.2023.PDF.PDF)

4. The Sheriff should develop a department-wide initiative to end deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
5. The Sheriff should seek the support of the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) and the Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association (PPOA), for his vision, policies, and objectives regarding deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
6. The Sheriff should institute a policy where any captain who is unable or unwilling to support the Sheriff's policy without reservations should be subject to appropriate discipline ranging from transfer to a less critical position with little or no presence of deputy gangs and deputy cliques to termination for insubordination in the Sheriff's considered judgment and pursuant to required due process.
7. The Sheriff should consider assigning a senior captain and a newly promoted captain to larger, high activity stations to ensure maximum supervision and mentoring of lieutenants and sergeants while retaining full accountability within the paramilitary structure of LASD.
8. As set forth in recommendations in #2 and #3 above, the Sheriff should adopt and promptly implement a clear policy to address the need to eliminate deputy gangs and deputy cliques and prohibit tattoos that depict violence, which must be supported and explained by the Sheriff's leadership team.
9. The Sheriff should investigate violations of the policy banning joining or participating in deputy gang and deputy cliques and refer violations for discipline.

10. The Department's leadership team should consistently and recurrently emphasize the adverse career consequences of creating or joining a deputy gang or deputy clique.
11. The Department must implement a procedure for notifying the District Attorney's Office if a deputy testifying as a witness participates in a prohibited deputy gang or deputy clique.
12. The Department should actively investigate violation of the policy prohibiting joining, participating in, or soliciting deputies to join deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
13. The Department should train supervisors how to mentor deputies about the adverse consequences of involvement in deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
14. The Department should implement a series of community meetings involving patrol station captains, commanders, and chiefs to ascertain the impact of deputy gangs and deputy cliques on community relations.
15. The Sheriff should use his authority to re-deploy and rotate deputies based upon the needs of the Department to eliminate the formation and re-emergence of deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
16. The Department should re-assess the dual career track for Custody/Court Services and provide a written report to the COC explaining what factors impede implementation.
17. The Department should assess the feasibility of first assignments to patrol rather than jail facilities and provide a written report to the COC explaining what factors, if any, impede implementation.

18. The Sheriff should ensure that senior executives and unit leaders, notably captains and commanders are implementing the Sheriff's policy, vision, and objectives regarding deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
19. The Office of Inspector General should monitor implementation of the policy banning, joining, or participating in deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
20. Promotional considerations should include an evaluation of evidence that a member under consideration for a promotion is currently involved in a deputy gang or deputy clique, including the nature and extent of the member's involvement and whether it was before or after the date of the policy issued by the Sheriff.
21. The Department should include a standard set of questions regarding a deputy's current affiliations with deputy gangs or deputy cliques in the use of force review process and in administrative and internal criminal investigations.
22. The Department should ensure that captains are notified of deputies involved in force incidents or personnel misconduct investigations who have affiliations with deputy gangs or deputy cliques, including tattoos associated with such groups.
23. The Department should ensure that the CompStat process for risk management indicators regarding the existence of deputy gangs or deputy cliques within a patrol station or other Department unit is implemented and is effective in assessing the risk mitigation efforts of unit commanders.

24. The Department must ensure that captains hold sergeants and lieutenants accountable for deputies under their supervision involved in deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
25. The Department must ensure that sergeants actively and recurrently mentor deputy personnel and enforcement of the policy prohibiting deputy gangs and deputy cliques.
26. The Sheriff should flatten the chain of command by eliminating at least one layer of supervision between him and the captains running patrol stations.
27. The prohibition against joining or participating in deputy gangs or cliques should be a condition of employment.

Through motions and support of legislation like Assemblymember Mike Gipson's 2021 Assembly Bill (AB) 958 on prohibiting participation in deputy gangs, the Board has articulated very clearly that they have zero tolerance for deputy gangs, cliques, and behaviors that lead to misconduct, criminal or otherwise, against their colleagues and the community.

Additionally, Sheriff Robert Luna, as a show of commitment to the issue of deputy gangs, announced the appointment of Eileen Decker as the Director of the newly created Constitutional Policing Unit within LASD. The Unit will "play an important role in eradicating deputy gangs from the Department, in collaboration with the Undersheriff, the Civilian Oversight Commission and Inspector General..."<sup>3</sup>

As another step to fully support the objective to eradicate deputy gangs in LASD, the Board must also adopt the 27 recommendations and request the Sheriff to take

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://lasd.org/sheriff-luna-creates-office-of-constitutional-policing/>

heed and follow through in adoption and implementation.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the 27 recommendations of the Civil Oversight Commission
2. Request the Sheriff to review, adopt, and implement the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission's 27 recommendations.
3. Direct the Chief Executive Office and County Counsel to support the Sheriff in implementation of the 27 recommendations.

# # #

HLS:el