



County of Los Angeles

February 18, 2025

Dawyn R. Harrison  
County Counsel

**Board of Supervisors**

Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor, First District

Holly Mitchell  
Supervisor, Second District

Lindsey P. Horvath  
Supervisor, Third District

Janice Hahn  
Supervisor, Fourth District

Kathryn Barger  
Supervisor, Fifth District

TO: EDWARD YEN  
Executive Officer  
Board of Supervisors

Attention: Agenda Preparation

FROM: ADRIENNE M. BYERS  
Litigation Cost Manager

RE: **Item for the Board of Supervisors' Agenda**  
**County Claims Board Recommendation**  
**Eric Gonzalez, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al.**  
**United States District Court Case No. 2:22-cv-08525**



Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation regarding the above-referenced matter. Also attached are the Case Summary and Summary Corrective Action Plan to be made available to the public.

It is requested that this recommendation, Case Summary, and Summary Corrective Action Plan be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda.

AMB:lzs

Attachments

## Board Agenda

### MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation: Authorize settlement of the matter entitled Eric Gonzalez, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al., United States District Court Case No. 2:22-cv-08525, in the amount of \$200,000, and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the Sheriff's Department's budget.

This civil rights lawsuit against the Sheriff's Department alleges unreasonable search and seizure at Plaintiffs' home.

## CASE SUMMARY

### INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME	Eric Gonzalez, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al.
CASE NUMBER	2:22-CV-08525
COURT	United States District Court
DATE FILED	November 21, 2022
COUNTY DEPARTMENT	Sheriff's Department
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	\$ 200,000
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF	Donald W. Cook
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY	Minas Samuelian Senior Deputy County Counsel
NATURE OF CASE	<p>This is a recommendation to settle for \$200,000 inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs, a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Eric Gonzalez and Jacqueline Aguirre, alleging unreasonable search and seizure.</p> <p>Given the high risks and uncertainties of litigation, a reasonable settlement at this time will avoid further litigation costs. The full and final settlement of the case in the amount of \$200,000 is recommended.</p>
PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	\$ 69,961
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	\$ 889



## Summary Corrective Action Plan

The intent of this form is to assist departments in writing a corrective action plan summary for attachment to the settlement documents developed for the Board of Supervisors and/or the County of Los Angeles Claims Board. The summary should be a specific overview of the claims/lawsuits identified root causes and corrective actions (status, time frame, and responsible party). This summary does not replace the Corrective Action Plan form. If there is a question related to confidentiality, please consult County Counsel.

Date of incident/event:	May 19, 2022, approximately 2:00 a.m.
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	<p style="text-align: center;">Summary Corrective Action Plan 2023-149</p> <p><b>Details in this document summarize the incident. The information provided is a culmination of various sources to provide an abstract of the incident.</b></p> <p>Multiple investigative reports indicate on May 18, 2022, an adult male (Suspect) was arrested by Deputies for being in possession of body armor as well as possession of a controlled substance for sales (methamphetamine). During the traffic stop, the Suspect admitted to not having a driver's license and to being on active probation. The Deputies were able to confirm the Suspect's name utilizing Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department resources, confirm his identity, and his active probation status.</p> <p>During the investigation, it appeared to the Deputies the Suspect was living out of his vehicle due to the quantity of personal items inside the vehicle. The Suspect told the Deputies he was homeless and was living out of his car which was registered to his father. The Suspect stated he usually parked at his father's house or stayed with his girlfriend. The Suspect was arrested and transported to and booked at Norwalk Station.</p> <p>Detective One and Detective Two were made aware of the arrest and prepared a search warrant for location they believed was the Suspect's residence. Detective One utilized four sources connecting the Suspect to the target location (known as a "nexus"). At the time, Detective One did not have any information that would lead him to believe that the Suspect was homeless.</p> <p>On May 19, 2022, at 2:00 a.m., Norwalk Station Operation Safe Streets Bureau team (Detectives One through Five and Sergeant One) served the warrant. Detectives knocked on the door to announce their presence, stated they had a search warrant, and demanded entry into the location. The Plaintiff requested the Detectives to provide identification prior to the Detectives making a forced entry into the home. The occupants (Plaintiffs) voluntarily exited the location and were escorted one at a time out of the residence.</p> <p>Plaintiff One was first escorted out of the house. He stated that only his wife (Plaintiff Two) and baby remained inside the residence. Plaintiff One also stated he had moved into the residence in August, six months prior to this search warrant. He told a Detective he thought they had the wrong person. Plaintiff One further said he had heard the previous residents were a "bunch of troublemakers."</p>

	<p>Plaintiff Two, who was pregnant, was escorted outside. Minutes later, a Detective walked out with the baby and handed the baby to Plaintiff Two. Plaintiff Two told Detectives they moved into the house approximately six months earlier.</p> <p>Sergeant One spoke to Plaintiff One who told him that he had received mail for a man (same name as the suspect) at the address and further stated he did not know the Suspect.</p> <p>Sergeant One then spoke to Plaintiff Two, who stated she did not know the man who used to live in the house but had received mail for a man (same name as the Suspect) at the location when they first moved in. Plaintiff Two further stated she had not had any contact with him and only heard about him through neighbors.</p> <p>Sergeant One determined the Plaintiffs were the new homeowners and the Suspect no longer lived there. Sergeant One stated the location was not searched, and both Plaintiffs were released without further incident. Sergeant One left a Claims for Damages to Person or Property form for damage caused when Sheriff's Department members forced entry into the location.</p>
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1. Briefly describe the **root cause(s)** of the claim/lawsuit:

A **Department** root cause in this incident is Detectives authored and executed a search warrant at the Plaintiff's residence based on the information provided during the time the Suspect was booked.

A **Department** root cause in this incident is Detectives did not communicate with the arresting Deputies about statements made by the Suspect regarding living in his vehicle.

A **non-Department** root cause in the incident is the Suspect did not provide accurate residential information to the arresting Deputies.

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:  
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

The incident was thoroughly reviewed by representatives from Operation Safe Streets Bureau. The review concluded the Detectives were working within the guidelines of what is expected from personnel assigned to Operation Safe Streets Bureau and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

In the days following the incident, all teams at Operation Safe Streets Bureau were briefed on the importance of finding a solid nexus to a location for a search warrant using at least three current sources.


As a result of this incident, briefings occurred at each unit and continued for several months thereafter.


3. Are the corrective actions addressing Department-wide system issues?

- Yes – The corrective actions address Department-wide system issues.  
 No – The corrective actions are only applicable to the affected parties.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Name: (Risk Management Coordinator)	
Julia M. Valdés, A/Captain Risk Management Bureau	
Signature: 	Date: 11/26/2024

Name: (Department Head)	
Holly A. Francisco, Assistant Sheriff Countywide Operations	
Signature: 	Date: 12/4/24

<b>Chief Executive Office Risk Management Inspector General USE ONLY</b>	
Are the corrective actions applicable to other departments within the County?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the corrective actions potentially have County-wide applicability. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the corrective actions are applicable only to this Department.	
Name: Betty Karmirlian (A/Risk Management Inspector General)	
Signature: 	Date: 12/4/2024