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April 15, 2025

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

**AUTHORIZE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
TO EMPLOY ONE RETIRED COUNTY EMPLOYEE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS
AND GRANT AN EXCEPTION TO THE
180-DAY WAITING PERIOD REQUIRED UNDER THE
CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' PENSION REFORM ACT**

**(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The Los Angeles County Public Defender requests the Board's approval to grant an exception to the 180-day waiting period required under the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) of 2013 before reinstating retired County employees as 120-day rehired retirees. The Department affirms that the retiree is highly skilled and that the work she will be performing is critical.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Waive the 180-day break in service requirement and reemploy retired County employee, Patricia Hughes, to a 120-day temporary assignment as a Deputy Public Defender II at the Department's Van Nuys Branch Office in the Department's North Region.

2. Approve the request for Patricia Hughes to receive compensation at the rate of \$75.37 per hour and work no more than 960 work hours within a fiscal year, upon the Board's approval of her temporary reemployment as a Deputy Public Defender II.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Public Defender's request to waive the 180-day break in service requirement is intended to provide the Department with additional staffing support to help address operational gaps due to higher-than-average attorney attrition and vacancies, while the Department continues working toward hiring and training more permanent attorney staff.

The Department has implemented various mitigation measures to address challenges related to attorney recruitment, attrition, and workload. To expedite the hiring process and fill vacant attorney positions, the Department has streamlined recruitment efforts. While it previously focused on entry-level hires, it has now expanded recruitment to include more experienced attorneys at the Deputy Public Defender II level. Additionally, the Department has utilized Civil Service Rule 13.04 on Emergency Appointments to accelerate hiring and has expanded its attorney law clerk program, which serves as an effective pipeline for entry-level attorney positions.

To further bolster staffing levels, the Department has collaborated with the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association to recruit and rehire retired deputy public defenders from both the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender offices.

As part of these efforts, the Department intends to assign Ms. Hughes, a former Public Defender felony attorney, to Departments 100 and 101 at the Van Nuys Branch Office. These high-volume arraignment courts require immediate staffing support due to current shortages.

The Van Nuys Branch felony attorneys currently manage the highest felony caseloads in the office. Ms. Hughes brings extensive experience in Mental Health programs and complex felony defense, allowing her to provide immediate and effective support without requiring additional training. Her expertise will help alleviate operational strain by handling felony preliminary hearings, felony arraignments, Mental Health Diversion cases, and misdemeanor arraignments.

As a 120-day rehired retiree, Ms. Hughes will provide essential supplemental coverage to address immediate operational gaps and ensure continued efficiency in Branch operations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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Approval of the recommended actions is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan North Star 1, Make Investments that Transform Lives and North Star 2, Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities, and aligned with the Board's *Care First, Jails Last*, and Homeless Initiative priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT / FINANCING

The Department will utilize a budgeted vacant Deputy Public Defender II to fund the requested rehired retiree.


FACTS AND PROVISION/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The recommended action is consistent with the California PEPRA of 2013, which allows a person who retired from County service to serve without reinstatement from retirement or loss or interruption of benefits provided by the retirement system before a period of 180 days following the date of retirement if the Board certifies the position is critically needed and the retiree possesses the critical skills to perform the work in limited duration.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended actions will strengthen the Department's staffing capacity, helping to address operational gaps caused by higher-than-average attorney attrition and vacancies.

Respectfully submitted,



RICARDO D. GARCIA
Public Defender

RDG:JT:BD:Ih

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
- Chief Executive Officer
- County Counsel
- Auditor-Controller
- Human Resources
- Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association