

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

AGN. NO.
June 30, 2026

Survivors First: Protection Against Sexual Assault in the Los Angeles County Jails

Every year, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) proclaims April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and prioritizes the health, safety, and well-being of survivors of sexual assault. Last June, the Board unanimously supported the motion, “Health and Safety for All: Preservation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act Standards” to ensure the LA County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) and Probation Department are compliant with the Prison Rape Elimination Act for the safety and protection of incarcerated adults and youth.

Since the passage of the motion, there have been concerning news articles and reports from oversight entities that, despite there being reports of alleged rapes and sexual abuse filed by people who are incarcerated, LASD has determined that none of the claims were “substantiated.” LASD reports that all allegations of sexual abuse and harassment¹ are documented and processed promptly, thoroughly, and objectively.”² However, the investigations are conducted in-house, take almost a year for a disposition, not all witnesses are interviewed during the investigation, amongst other concerns.

Moreover, the LA Times stated that “there hasn’t been a ‘substantiated’ allegation

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-15/la-county-jail-sexual-assault-claims-prea>

² Id.

MOTION

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of sexual abuse by [LASD] staff against an inmate in the nation's largest jail system since 2021.”³ LASD records show that between 2022-2025, there were 592 allegations of abuse and harassment against staff, yet LASD determined that all allegations were unsubstantiated.

Unfortunately, despite these investigations, LASD deputies have historically caused massive harm and trauma to incarcerated people. In 2018, former LASD deputy Giancarlo Scott was accused of “engaging in unlawful sexual acts with women at the Century Detention Facility between March and September of 2017,”⁴ and charged with “six felony counts of sexual activity with a detainee...and two misdemeanor counts of sexual activity with a detainee at a detention facility.”⁵ In November 2023, LASD Deputy Jonathan Tejada Pardes was arrested on suspicion of sexual assault at Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF). This doesn't account for other LASD deputies arrested and sentenced for assault, such as Sean Essex who was sentenced to 40 years in prison in 2024 for sexually abusing four girls who were 13 years of age and younger.⁶

In late 2025, 38 incarcerated people filed a class action lawsuit, which alleged that there was “widespread, systemic sexual abuse, harassment, and voyeurism by male LASD deputies at CRDF.”⁷ Plaintiffs alleged that deputies were able to “routinely engage in frequent and prolonged unobstructed viewing of the entire nude bodies of female inmates taking showers.”⁸ While deputies escorted incarcerated women, they would “intentionally press their crotches against the handcuffed hands of the female

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

⁵ <https://abc7.com/post/la-sheriffs-deputy-charged-w--sexually-assaulting-6-inmates-in-lynwood/3121381/>

⁶ <https://lacounty.gov/2024/06/07/la-county-sheriffs-deputy-sentenced-to-40-years-in-prison-for-sexually-abusing-four-girls/>

⁷ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-12-27/la-county-womens-jail-sexual-abuse-lawsuit>

⁸ Id.

inmates...and intentionally fondle inmates' hips, buttocks, and bodies in a sexual manner.”⁹

During the same period that LASD reported that there were no substantiated claims of LASD deputies sexually abusing people who are incarcerated, LASD substantiated 28 out of 296 allegations of inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse or harassment.¹⁰

These allegations of sexual assault and harassment are not new. In fact, oversight entities (like the Sybil Brand Commission and the Office of Inspector General), and advocacy organizations (like the American Civil Liberties Union and Just Detention International), have shared multiple accounts of allegations, concerns regarding the quality of LASD investigations (including ethical concerns of having the perpetrator organization conducting investigations).

LASD said that “substantiated allegations” often require cooperation and some sort of evidence, which can make them more challenging...[h]owever, unsubstantiated allegations are more common because it has a lower threshold.”¹¹ The Office of Inspector General, which oversees LASD, responded that it “would be much better if all complaints were investigated by people who were outside the chain of command,”¹² a logical solution given people who are incarcerated are under constant surveillance of LASD and are assaulted, yet it is LASD that conducts the investigation.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-15/la-county-jail-sexual-assault-claims-prea#:~:text=Officials%20question%20sheriff's%20report%20of,inmate%20at%20Men's%20Central%20Jail.&text=This%20is%20read%20by%20an,promptly%2C%20thoroughly%20and%20objectively.%E2%80%9D>

¹¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-15/la-county-jail-sexual-assault-claims-prea#:~:text=Officials%20question%20sheriff's%20report%20of,inmate%20at%20Men's%20Central%20Jail.&text=This%20is%20read%20by%20an,promptly%2C%20thoroughly%20and%20objectively.%E2%80%9D>

¹² Id.

Studies have consistently shown that reporting sexual assault and abuse is underreported because the survivor/victim fears retaliation, may think that their allegations will not be believed and that they will somehow be at fault, amongst others.

The County is embroiled in multiple lawsuits alleging abuse, stemming from not just LASD, but also the Probation Department, Department of Children and Family Services, among others, costing hundreds of millions to billions of dollars. Steps are being taken to address these complaints, but the County must take preventative measures to stem sexual abuse, assault, and harassment in all its forms now.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Request the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), in collaboration with the Office of Inspector General, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, the Sybil Brand Commission, in consultation with County Counsel, to provide the Board, in writing, with a report back in 90 days, on recommendations to:
 - a. Update the investigative responsibilities and processes to limit LASD's role in investigating sexual assault allegations committed by deputies against incarcerated people, as legally allowable;
 - b. Onboard sexual assault counselors to be part of the investigative process for support and safety purposes;
 - c. Create a Survivor's Bill of Rights in collaboration with service providers¹³; and
2. Request the LA Sheriff's Department to:
 - a. Utilize the PREA risk assessment tool to not just classify but actually house potential sexual offenders and victims at intake;

¹³ Just Detention International, ACLU SoCal, LA LGBT Center, Peace Over Violence

- b. Install shower privacy screens, film, or barriers at each facility to ensure adequate obstruction of “opposite gender viewing” [of a person in custody’s] breasts, buttocks, or genitalia” pursuant to PREA standard 115.15(d) within 90 days or earlier;
- c. Implement PREA investigative training for floor sergeants tasked with performing an initial PREA investigation and ensure there is an LASD staff member who is trained in the PREA investigative training to be dispatched to any potential PREA incident;
- d. Ensure PREA investigations are “prompt, thorough, and objective” per PREA standard 115.71 by requiring that LASD interview all potential witnesses;
- e. Ensure that all people in custody, per PREA standard 115.53, have access to confidential emotional support services, and immediately restore the emotional support service line or make alternative arrangements to provide confidential emotional support services and trauma informed programming;
- f. In accordance with PREA standard 115.42(d), re-assess transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex incarcerated individuals’ housing twice a year; and
- g. In accordance with PREA standard 115.31(d), conduct annual PREA training subject to the gender identity of people in custody, at all jail facilities, including patrol station lock ups and court holding tanks, not just at Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF), as people in custody with diverse gender identities are housed in different facilities, like Men’s Central Jail (MCJ), which houses the K6-G population.

3. Direct the Office of Inspector General, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, and the Sybil Brand Commission to continue to monitor and engage with TGI individuals and other incarcerated people on PREA compliance and responses to sexual assault complaints and allegations and report back in respective reports to the Board.

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