AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL September 15, 2026

Identifying Deputy Gangs within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to Ensure Accountability and Risk Mitigation

For decades, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has faced credible and documented allegations regarding the existence of deputy gangs and secret subgroups operating within its ranks. Deputy gangs have been linked to patterns of excessive force, criminal and administrative misconduct, a code of silence, and a culture of impunity that undermines public trust and compromises the safety of both residents and deputies.

Courts, independent oversight bodies, and investigative journalists have documented incidents in which membership in these deputy gangs were associated with unlawful uses of force, falsification of reports, witness intimidation, retaliation against whistleblowers, and targeted harassment of Black and Latino community members.

Over the years, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) has acted decisively to end deputy gangs and restore dignity to the Department. The Board has also passed numerous motions aimed at eradicating deputy gangs that operate within LASD:

- March 2019: "Comprehensive Study of Secret Sheriff's Deputy Subgroups,"[1]
- July 2019: "Expanding Authority to Investigate Deputy Secret Societies,"[2]
- March 2023: "Deputy Gangs: Support for the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission's Recommendations to Eradicate Deputy Gangs in the Los

[1] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/133802.pdf
[2] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/138107.pdf

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Angeles County Sheriff's Department,"[3]

Additionally, numerous news articles have been written about this issue. The existence of deputy gangs has been written about since the 1970s[4]:

- The 1992 Kolts Commission's report,[5]
- 2012 Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence,[6]
- 2021 Loyola Law School's "50 Years of Deputy Gangs in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department: Identifying Root Causes and Effects to Advocate for Meaningful Reform,"[7]
- 2021 Knock LA's investigative series, "A Tradition of Violence: The History of Deputy Gangs in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department,"[8]
- 2021 Rand study, "Understanding Subgroups Within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department",[9] and
- 2023 "Report and Recommendations of the Special Counsel to Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Regarding Deputy Gangs and Deputy Cliques in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.[10]

In July 2021, Congressmember Maxine Waters called on the United States Department of Justice to investigate the allegations about the Executioners, a deputy gang that operated out of the Compton Sheriff's station[11].

In 1973, the first deputy gang that LASD acknowledged was the "Little Devils," operating out of the East Los Angeles Sheriff's Station and documented in an internal memo. This deputy gang emerged in the aftermath of the Chicano Moratorium, during which three people died following interactions with LASD and LAPD. Deputies at the East Los Angeles Sheriff's Station have continued to be associated with deputy gangs such as the Banditos and are known to wear pins with the Fort Apache logo, a racist symbol

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[3] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/178530.pdf
[4] https://coc.lacounty.gov/deputy-gangs/
[5] https://clearinghouse.net/doc/10910/
[6] https://ccjv.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CCJV-Report.pdf
[7] https://www.lls.edu/academics/centers/centerforjuvenilelawpolicy/cjlpdeputygangreport/
[8] https://knock-la.com/tradition-of-violence-lasd-gang-history/
[9] https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA616-1.html
[10] 1138014_DeputyGangsSpecialCounselReporttoCOC3.2.2023.PDF.PDF
[11] https://waters.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/waters-demands-federal-investigation-los-angeles-sheriff-s-department

reflecting the violence inflicted during the Chicano Moratorium. Over time, the number of identified deputy gangs, active or not, has grown, increasing from six to eighteen, and now to twenty-three:

- Banditos
- Buffalo Soldiers
- Cavemen
- Compton Executioners
- Cowboys
- Ghetto Birds
- Gladiators
- Grim Reapers
- Industry Indians
- IPA
- Jump Out Boys
- Little Devils
- Little Red Devils
- Lomita Lizards
- Lynwood Vikings
- Pirates
- Posse
- Rattlesnakes
- Regulators
- Spartans
- Tasmanian Devils
- The Leafs
- 4000 Boys
- 3000 Boys
- 2000 Boys
- Temple Station V-Boys
- Wayside Whities

The existence of deputy gangs within LASD is not a secret, but a well-known problem that has cost the County millions of dollars,[12] inflicted an enormous amount of harm and trauma on communities, and eroded decades of trust between LASD and impacted communities.

In 2024, the Los Angeles Times reported that LASD internal investigators learned that "a group of deputies at the Lakewood station shared a common tattoo: a spade, with the number 13."[13] At that time, Lakewood Sheriff's Station supervisors conducted a survey asking these deputies whether the tattoos were a sign of a new deputy gang. When the deputies surveyed concluded the tattoos were not indicative of a new deputy gang, the Department stopped its investigation That same year, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) raised concerns about a newly identified deputy gang

[12] https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/gangs-within-los-angeles-county-sheriffs-department-are-banned-with-new-policy/
[13] https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-03-01/station-tattoo-or-deputy-gang-sign

based out of the Norwalk station that used a logo featuring Nazi-like imagery and a symbol described as a "skull with blood-red eyes, pierced by a jagged lightning bolt."[14] This deputy gang is reportedly a subgroup of another Norwalk station subgroup identified by a Wile E. Coyote logo. Though the existence of this deputy gang was identified in late 2024, sources told the Los Angeles Times that these gangs have been around since the 1990s.

Likewise, in 2022, a group of LASD deputies allegedly flashed a handgun, mocked a group of teenagers, and called one of them a "monkey" and used the N-word, at a Montclair bowling alley. Two of the four deputies involved in the incident admitted to having an Industry Indians tattoo. When LASD's Internal Affairs (IA) Bureau began its investigation into the bowling alley incident, investigators did not ask the involved deputies for names of others who might share the same tattoo. IA told the Industry Sheriff's Station leaders about the tattoos but told the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that they had no plans to investigate who else at the station was a member of the station's deputy gang. Separately, two years prior, four deputies involved in the Montclair incident were reportedly involved in violence against Joseph Perez, a 22-year-old man, who was unarmed and experiencing a mental health crisis. The circumstances of that incident remain the subject of ongoing litigation.

In its quarterly report, "Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department,"[15] covering the period from October through December 2025, the OIG reported that LASD was asked whether the Department had identified any group that meets the definition of a law enforcement gang under Penal Code section 13670. LASD responded that it did not identify any such group. The OIG then followed up by asking LASD to "confirm that the Department has not identified any group that qualifies as a law enforcement gang." In its response, LASD noted that while the Department has not shied away from conducting multiple large-scale investigations to determine whether there is evidence that employees have engaged in a pattern of prohibited conduct on behalf of a

[14] https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-10-05/oversight-officials-raise-concerns-about-nazi-symbolism-in-newly-discovered-deputy-subgroup-logo
[15] https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/a1fed311-efc7-42b2-b6f5-68818877eb96/Reform%20and%20Oversight%20Efforts%20-%20Los%20Angeles%20County%20Sheriff_s%20Department%20-%20October%20to%20December%202025_Final%20_%20LASD.pdf

prohibited group, LASD still did not identify any group that it found to meet the definition of a law enforcement gang under Penal Code section 13670[16].

Deputy gangs are not a problem of the past, but a persistent issue that continues today. Notifications to LASD regarding alleged deputy gangs have been made as recently as June 2025, based on data provided to the OIG in December 2025. If the existence of deputy gangs is not adequately addressed and resolved, this problem will continue to plague the County. The County must serve as a better custodian of communities that have historically and systematically been harmed by law enforcement misconduct and must be better stewards of public resources by significantly reducing the millions of dollars paid out in settlements for cases involving misconduct by deputy gangs and secret subgroups.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Request the Sheriff, in coordination with County Counsel, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) to develop a comprehensive framework, including an implementation plan with milestones, responsible parties, and dates certain, for identifying and naming deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups, and report back to the Board in writing in 120 days. The report should include but not be limited to:
    a. An established criteria for identifying deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups based on patterns of conduct, shared identifiers, logos and other evidence and information including but not limited to:
        i. Pending and concluded administrative investigations;
        ii. Findings or reports by oversight entities;
        iii. Litigation, depositions, or settlements;
        iv. Internal department records, including Internal Affairs Bureau investigations; and
        v. Testimony, witness statements, and other reliable sources of information and evidence.
2. Request the Sheriff, in consultation with County Counsel, to develop and implement a process to publicly identify, name, and report on any deputy

[16] California Code, PEN 13670

gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups revealed during the course of the Department's internal inquiries and investigations, without requiring criminal charges or convictions as a condition of public identification, consistent with applicable laws within 120 days of the approval of this motion.

3. Request the Sheriff, and direct County Counsel, to collaborate and jointly provide the Board, in writing in a confidential memorandum, in 120 days:
    a. A list of: (1) all alleged or suspected deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups identified by others to LASD; (2) all deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups LASD has confirmed currently exist in LASD; and (3) all deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups referenced or alleged in any pending administrative investigations or Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) referrals made by the Department;
    b. A summary of the status of any pending administrative investigations and POST referrals, made by the Department, concerning allegations relating to deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups, de-identified as appropriate consistent with applicable law;
    c. For the pending investigations and POST referrals, a list of the alleged name and/or identifying symbol, logos, or tattoos associated with each deputy gang, clique, and secret subgroup, and an identification of the gender and racial/ethnic background of each alleged member of any such deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups, de-identified as appropriate consistent with applicable law;
    d. An explanation of whether LASD investigations currently include, or have included in the past, a requirement that deputies show tattoos on their arms and legs below the knee and, if not, why this was / is not part of LASD's investigation protocol; and
    e. County Counsel shall provide this confidential report, upon its completion, to the OIG, and the Executive Director of the Sheriff COC, where legally permissible, pursuant to LA County Code § 6.44.190(H) and the OIG's special counsel role to the Board arising from this Directive.

4. Request the Sheriff, in coordination with the OIG, to conduct a comprehensive review of all patrol stations, custody facilities, and specialized units using the criteria established in Directive 1, and to report back to the Board in writing in 180 days with a list of deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups within those locations using the established criteria, and to make that list publicly accessible.
5. Request the Sheriff to report back in writing within 60 days describing the Office of Constitutional Policing's role and prevention and investigative processes when there are allegations involving deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups.
6. Request the Sheriff to use existing resources and systems to develop a publicly accessible online reporting system for the general public to document complaints and allegations of the existence of deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups and ensure that all complaints submitted through the system are documented in a standardized format and shared with the OIG aligned with their quarterly reporting.
7. Direct the OIG, in coordination with the Sybil Brand Commission, to inspect LASD facilities, including but not limited to patrol stations, patrol vehicles, custody facilities, and specialized units, and inventory (including via photographs and/or video recordings), all logos, badges, seals, or other insignia on the facilities' structure or furnishings that are not official County and/or Sheriff insignias and report, in writing, its findings to the Board within 90 days and quarterly thereafter; and to request the Sheriff give the OIG access, with LASD security and oversight as appropriate, to such facilities necessary to conduct this inspection and inventory.
8. Request the Sheriff to adopt a Department-wide prohibition on the display, possession, or promotion of racist symbols, insignia, or iconography, including on or within patrol stations, custody facilities, specialized units, department property, equipment, and uniforms, and to require the removal of any such existing symbols or displays, except where maintained for legitimate investigative, evidentiary, training, or oversight purposes.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct County Counsel to report back in writing in 120 days on County Counsel's role in supporting the County's efforts to eradicate deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups. The report should include County Counsel's authority and responsibilities in identifying systemic legal risks and reducing future litigation and liability, and include the status of any ongoing meet-and-confer processes related to, or addressing deputy gang activity, any barriers to their completion, and options for expediting the completion of those processes.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct County Counsel, in collaboration with the OIG and the COC (or an ad hoc committee thereof), to report back to the Board in writing in 120 days on the feasibility of having an entity, outside the LASD chain of command, including an external, independent entity; the County Department of Human Resources; or the California Department of Justice pursuant to legislation similar to Assembly Bill 1506[17], investigate allegations of deputy gangs, cliques, and secret subgroups membership or activity and, if appropriate, recommend or impose discipline or other employee corrective action accordingly.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer and County Counsel to report back to the Board in writing within 120 days to identify budget accountability measures to reduce LASD's judgment and damages line.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct Chief Executive Officer and County Counsel, in coordination with the OIG, to report back to the Board in writing in 120 days on the legal, budgetary, administrative, and oversight options available to the Board to enforce the directives of this motion, and proposed alternative corrective action, if LASD determines they cannot or will not implement.

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[17] https://oag.ca.gov/ois-incidents