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Re: BU 702 Staffing Crisis: Restoring Field Operations, Unblocking Promotional Lists, and Rationalizing Duty Restrictions

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of Bargaining Unit 702: the Supervising Deputy Probation Officers Association (SDPOA), Teamsters Local 986, we submit this statement regarding the severe operational and supervisory deficit currently impacting the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

The official vacancy rate for BU 702 stands at 33.86%, representing 129 vacant budgeted positions. When factoring in leaves and absences, the functional vacancy rate approaches a critical 38%. The operational measures implemented under the hard hiring freeze have created acute structural bottlenecks that undermine both community safety and officer retention.

1. The Field Supervision Deficit

Mass redeployments to staff juvenile institutions have stripped regional field operations down to dangerous, skeletal levels. Today, field operations have declined to the point where a skeleton crew of only 70 officers countywide is supervising 21,800 probationers. This deployment makes meeting the American Probation and Parole Association's recommended 50-to-1 caseload ratio impossible.

2. Promotional Stagnation and Restrictive Leave Policies

The supervisory shortage is further exacerbated by two administrative policies:

- **Stalled Promotional Pipeline:** Veteran staff promotions remain frozen under a hard hiring freeze. Despite having more than 150 DPOs on a robust eligibility list, the average time to hire has stretched to 479 days. Withholding these promotions prevents the department from easily backfilling critical supervisory shortages.

- **Restrictive Leave Impact:** Current administrative policies actively block willing officers from contributing to field assignments. Officers with medical or light-duty restrictions are forced onto unpaid leave if they are barred from juvenile facilities, even when they are fully cleared and capable of performing field work. This is a self-inflicted bottleneck.

3. Workplace Stability and the Aging Workforce

With the CEO anticipating the hard hiring freeze to remain through the end of FY 2026-27, prolonged shortages are subjecting an aging workforce to extreme and unpredictable scheduling conditions. Personnel face sudden flips from day to night shifts, abrupt reassignments to distant facilities with inadequate notice, and mandatory overtime. These disruptive, short-notice schedules ignore personal circumstances, placing an impossible strain on single parents, caregivers, and their families.

This combination of a prolonged hiring freeze and extreme schedule unpredictability is a critical systemic risk that is rapidly accelerating the loss of experienced, veteran supervisors. Without intervention, the departure of seasoned leadership compromises operational safety and leaves front-line staff highly vulnerable.

To restore operational balance, the SDPOA respectfully requests that the Board direct the Chief Executive Office and the Probation Department to:

1. Authorize the immediate processing of promotions from the BU 702 eligibility list to fill key vacant supervisory positions.
2. Reform the light-duty policy to permit restricted officers to perform field supervision
3. Establish stable supervisory schedules and end disruptive reassignment practices to help retain veteran officers.

We appreciate the Board's ongoing attention to workforce stability and look forward to collaborating on solutions that support both departmental personnel and public safety.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Alba

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Attorney/Business Representative - Teamsters Local 986

Supervising Deputy Probation Officers Association (SDPOA)