



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION COMMISSION
9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90242
(562) 940-2754**



**Part I.
2018 Annual Report
April 1, 2019**



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Part II.

Primary Focus

The Probation Commission has traditionally focused primarily upon the young wards in County Juvenile Probation institutions, while providing cursory advisory oversight to the operations impacting the adult probationers.

The focus for youths has been to advise the Probation Department to promote health, education, vocational training, and aftercare programs to impact the antisocial behavior of minors and redirect them into a mainstream of the community where they can become productive members of society. This has remained the focus of the Commission since and during the United States Department of Justice monitoring of the Los Angeles County Probation Department's Juvenile Custody Facilities.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department works closely with the California Division of Juvenile Justice for individuals that will be released to Los Angeles County. The Probation Commission has made monitoring the programs and funding a priority of the commission's oversight.



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Part III.

Historical Background

The Probation Commission, originally the Probation Committee, was created in 1903 and is one of the County's oldest official bodies. Established to meet the Welfare and Institutions Code requirements for a Probation Committee in each county with the population more than 6,000,000 in lieu of a county juvenile justice commission, it consisted of not less than seven members designated as "Officers of the County" who were authorized to be called "Commissioners" in official correspondence and in the conduct of official business.

Under provisions of State law (Section 240 of the Welfare and Institutions Code), the Commission is mandatory and, consequently, has a permanent status in county government.

On February 23, 1960, by order of the Board of Supervisors, the Committee was increased from nine to ten members.

In April 1987, at the request of the County Board of Supervisors, the Legislature amended the Welfare and Institutions Code to change the title of the Probation Committee to Probation Commission. In July 1987, this action was signed into law by the Governor as part of AB 1287.

On September 7, 1999, by order of the Board of Supervisors, the Probation Commission was increased from ten to fifteen members.



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Part IV

Summary of Commission Activities and Efforts

Over the last three years as president of the Commission, I have been working to improve the quality of mandated inspections of our juvenile halls and camps. We assure minors in custody are treated humanely and within state regulations. We have collaborated in the past with the Bureau of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to obtain training and resources for conducting quality inspections. The Probation Commission completed annual inspections of all camps and juvenile halls as required under Section 229 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. Copies of inspection reports have been submitted to the Bureau of State and Community Corrections.

The Probation Commission held 22 hearings in 2018, probing into many areas of the Probation Department to review operations and advise to correct deficiencies regarding the safety and treatment of minors. The topics covered are listed below:

- Status reports on improving the grievance and Ombudsman system.
- Allocation of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funding.
- Staff training regarding trauma-affected youth and de-escalation techniques.
- Dispensing of psychotropic medication in camps and halls.
- Advising the Department to consider establishing a dedicated facility for mental health treatment.
- L.A Model for rehabilitation and education.
- Use of pepper spray and force in camps and halls including training.
- Tracking outcomes of Departmental efforts.
- Diversion.
- Post-detention services including Office of Diversion.
- Establishment of reporting protocols for reporting serious incidents.
- Environmental concerns (vermin) at Central Juvenile Hall.
- Recruitment.
- Access and sharing of Department population data and use of force/ pepper spray reports.
- The Department's implementation to Welfare and Institutions Code 210.6 regarding shackling and use of other restraints.
- Handling of pregnant minors in custody.
- Reserve Probation Officer Program.
- Response to Campus Kilpatrick inspection report
- Rise in use of H.O.P.E. Centers. (Healing Opportunities and Positive Engagement)
- Re-arrest and recidivism data.
- Resolution of serious safety conditions discovered during inspection at Nidorf Juvenile Hall.

The Commission received presentations from representatives of the Department of Mental Health, Dr. Marrow on the Custody Practice Model, the Office of Diversion and Re-entry,



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Georgetown, group homes, the Reserve Program and the Probation Reform Implementation Team.

Commissioners conducted many activities during this year outside of our monthly hearings. Probation Commissioners travel and spend hours at meeting, doing site visits and completing reports. They are referenced below:

As an instructor at the Probation Department Training Center in Pico Rivera, Commissioner Meredith conducted eight-hour courses at the Academy on ethics, including scenarios based on actual incidents. He also taught the laws of arrest under 832 of the California Penal Code.

Commissioner Butler provided 100 tickets to the Los Angeles Sparks Basketball game on August 5th. It was the third-year kids and staff attended the Sparks Women's Basketball game at the Staples Center #WeAreWomen game.

On November 8th, the Probation Commission and members of the Probation Reform and Implementation Team met together in a public setting to discuss and exchange information regarding the operation of the Probation Commission. Members of P.R.I.T asked questions about our efforts and procedures.



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Executive Summary

The Los Angeles County Probation Commission will continue to fulfill its mandate under the provisions of the California Welfare and Institutions Code 229; Which is to annually inspect juvenile camps and halls in Los Angeles County to assure compliance with applicable laws and regulations regarding the health, safety, welfare, and education of juveniles at these facilities. We will continue to serve as advisors to the Chief Probation Officer as authorized under 240 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. We seek to maximize opportunities which positively impact the behavior of probationers. We advocate for providing them with educational and vocational services. We will continue to advocate on behalf of the wards for access to health and mental health services. Our mission includes working with families, the community. It is important to build inter-governmental and multi-agency cooperation.

Some of our other projects for 2019 are:

- Continued monitoring of conditions at Central Juvenile Hall and advocating for the replacement of the facility to assure a safe and healthy environment for youth and staff.
- Advocating for dedicated facilities and resources within the Department for youth suffering from mental illness.
- Conducting routine reviews of data surrounding the use of force and pepper spray within Probation Department camps and halls and advocating for improved training and oversight of line staff and the humane treatment of those under the care and custody of the department.
- On-going review the Probation Department's grievance process for minors, parents and guardians and provide solutions for reform to assure all grievances are handled in a manner that would prevent incidents of abuse within Probation Department facilities.
- Study the feasibility of doing group home inspections under 229.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.
- Reviewing and recommending educational or vocational opportunities for youth in camps who already have a diploma or have completed their GED.
- Reviewing transportation issues for parents to improve parental engagement with their children in camps.
- Collaborating with members of the Probation Reform and Implementation Team to facilitate timely establishment of the Probation Oversight Commission.

The Probation Commission is keenly aware of the challenges the Probation Department faces. Although the population of minors within the camps and juvenile halls has steadily declined, the Department is now caring for youth with high needs that include post-trauma behavior and mental illness. We believe it is time to expand services at a dedicated mental treatment facility operated by the Department of Mental Health. We also believe the Probation Department should continue to provide peripheral security and support at such a facility. It is also critical to provide resources after minors exit the custody of the Probation Department to deter recidivism.



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We have been concerned for some time about the rise in the use of pepper spray and use of force, including assaults on line staff which were uncovered in our inspections and revealed in the media reporting. The issue is complex with underlying factors that include lack of training for line staff and supervisors, attitudes about employee discipline and working conditions and temperament and attitudes of minors entering the system. We also discovered failures to hold minors accountable for offenses committed against staff and other minors while in custody.

The Probation Department must quickly implement dialectical behavior therapy and de-escalation training at all levels of the Department to stem use of force incidents. The Department must continue to bring positive changes within its culture. The Probation Department must make capital expenditures for equipment to collect, manage and track various streams of data so their efforts can be evaluated and measured to ensure good outcomes for youth and adults under their care and supervision.

Members of the Probation Commission are eager to see full and timely implementation of the Probation Oversight Commission. (POC) The Probation Oversight Commission must be a robust body with the resources necessary to perform the important task of oversight of the Probation Department.

I commend Chief McDonald and her leadership staff for their efforts to be transparent and positively change the culture of the Probation Department. The Probation Department has monumental challenges ahead. We, the members of the Probation Commission look forward to working with her and her leadership staff to improve the Probation Department to assure the humane treatment of minors under the Department's care and custody.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Los Angeles County Probation Commission,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Gardner".

Joe Gardner, President
Los Angeles County Probation Commission