



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



February 3, 2021

George Gascon, District Attorney
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
211 West Temple Street, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear District Attorney Gascon:

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
PRESENCE AT PAROLE HEARINGS**

As the elected Sheriff, I have taken an oath to protect the residents of Los Angeles County. I do everything possible to support every member of our community, especially if they become a victim of a crime. As a progressive leader, I have instituted a variety of reforms within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) with the goal of providing the best public safety for all. Transparency and accountability are at the forefront of my reform measures.

Traditionally, the LASD has written letters expressing public safety concerns when a State prisoner is scheduled for a parole hearing. We believe this is important to give a voice for the voiceless and keep our commitment in good standing in support of those who have been victimized by violent crime. We both agree that reforms need to be made to increase the capacity to help those within our communities who are suffering from mental illness and substance abuse. That being said, I cannot understand why your office is barring prosecutors from attending parole hearings.

The purpose of this correspondence is to notify you, if prosecutors will no longer be allowed to attend parole hearings, the LASD will attend parole hearings in the absence of your prosecutors. At the request of family members, the LASD will do everything possible to give victims a voice at the table to address their concerns. Despite the lack of funding and resources in my Department, the LASD will continue to write letters in opposition and,

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when appropriate, will attend virtual parole hearings, or have investigators travel to an in-person parole hearing. I strongly believe this is the right thing to do.

The protection of victims' rights must be a priority for both the LASD, as well as the District Attorney's Office. As you know, leaders will agree to disagree at times; however, we must continually work together to provide the best public safety possible and advocate for the rights of victims. I wish you the best in office and will join you in fact-based reforms that truly enhance public safety and keep the rights of victims in mind.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "AVillanueva", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ALEX VILLANUEVA
SHERIFF

AV:JAV:aa
(Sheriff's Office)

c: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Second District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Third District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Fifth District, Board of Supervisors
Rodrigo A. Castro-Silva, County Counsel