



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



October 28, 2021

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

## IMMINENT THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY

As the elected Sheriff of Los Angeles County serving over ten million residents and managing an organization of 18,000 employees, I am notifying you of the imminent threat to public safety which will be created by your vaccination mandate and ratified by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) on August 10, 2021. If I were to follow your mandate, I could potentially lose 44 percent of my workforce in one day. I cannot enforce reckless mandates that put the public's safety at risk.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) has already been "defunded" by over one thousand positions. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors is the only board in the entire nation that has continued with last year's defund law enforcement movement. Every other board in the nation has restored funding to their law enforcement agencies. As of this week, homicide rates are up to 44 percent and aggravated assaults are up nearly 23 percent. Despite the substantial loss of personnel, increase in workload, and rise in crime, I have been provided no additional resources by the Board, and you continue to defund my department and freeze my service budget.

For the entire course of this pandemic and prior to any vaccination being available, my employees worked tirelessly to fulfill their commitment to public safety by continuing to answer calls for service, maintaining safe jails, and even assisting to vaccinate our most vulnerable at-risk community members. It is heartbreaking to think that these employees who worked through the pandemic and were called "heroes" are now being threatened with termination because they make a personal medical choice.

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Compounding this issue is the fact my Department is experiencing a mass exodus of employees who are retiring early. I currently have 1,605 employees that have 28 years of service or more. This means they could retire without financial consequence. This mandate would certainly expedite many of these employees decision to retire.

This Board's mandate will cause patrol services to significantly decline. I would be forced to take drastic measures such as reducing services to the County and contract residents, which would cause the closure and realignment of patrol stations. Specialized units including our Aero and Special Enforcement Bureaus, and Headquarters Detectives would be nearly eliminated.

Of great concern is the upcoming fire season. With the reduction of personnel, I would be unable to mobilize and deploy mobile field forces, which are critical in conducting evacuations during disasters. I have conveyed to other local law enforcement partners I could potentially not have resources to deploy in their time of need due to critical staffing shortages created by this Board's mandate.

There are other alternatives that the Department has incorporated to combat the COVID-19 virus. I have ordered my staff to wear masks. Those that have not been vaccinated must submit to COVID-19 testing. With the pandemic waning, there is no justification for your mandate. This mandate is like putting up storm windows after the storm has passed.

Unlike other County departments that can close their doors and merely cause an inconvenience to the general public, the Department operates 24/7 to protect the public. I cannot afford to cut emergency services or choose not to send a patrol car to assist a community member in need. As the Sheriff, I can firmly tell you this mandate will create a pandemic of chaos within our county resulting in tragic losses.

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

Sincerely,



ALEX VILLANUEVA  
SHERIFF