



FOR ALL INCARCERATED PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES



STATEMENT: We Made History, Now Let's Secure the Victory

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Los Angeles, C.A. –Three years ago the idea of civilian oversight was farfetched, not possible, and according to the sheriff's department unnecessary given what they already had in place. Yesterday the county supervisors voted to approve several key features of this commission. We watched as the board of supervisors voted in favor of a motion that justified the presence of former law enforcement on the commission and gave the district attorney a formal channel to weigh in on the selection process. The language of the motion warns that restricting law enforcement from sitting on the commission would be “overtly discriminatory.”

Those of us who have been in this fight are disappointed that the board would blur the civil rights history of the term "discrimination" in a moment where #BlackLivesMatter actions over the last three years have exposed the targeting of Black people by law enforcement. We are deeply troubled with the board's decision to entertain the idea of former law enforcement sitting on this commission in the same year that former Undersheriff Paul Tanaka will be on trial for corruption charges and while former Sheriff Baca has been denied immunity in that trial. Both of them have had their reigns on the department for at least a decade.

While Dignity and Power Now and the Coalition to End Sheriff Violence are in this work for the long haul and while many civilian oversight bodies have increased their powers and refined their structures over time, we are not interested in repeating those histories. It took the New York Civilian Review Board over twenty years to get where it is now with more effective leadership, subpoena and disciplinary power, and an average rate of substantiating complaints of 70 days. It's not uncommon for complaints to take a over a year to process in other cities. We don't have that kind of time. This historical moment requires us to fight for the totality of our vision and for that vision to be realized at the outset. The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence has been pushing five non-negotiable demands that are the foundation of that vision.

As we move forward, we are clear that creating independent civilian oversight over the largest sheriff's department in the country – running the largest jail system in the world – is a historic accomplishment. We also know that the victory for Black and Brown people who bear the brunt of incarceration and excessive force in Los Angeles must be secured and protected. **For us victory is ensuring that formerly incarcerated people are on this commission. Victory is ensuring that the input of the district attorney does not in practice undermine the input of the community during the selection process. Victory is securing subpoena power for the commission. Victory is ensuring that former law enforcement are not appointed to a commission that community members across L.A. County have demanded be reserved for civilians.**

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