

## Coalition Calls On Working Group and County Supervisors to Give Subpoena Power to Civilian Oversight Commission

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**Press Conference:** Friday, February 20th, 2015 at 11:15 a.m. in front of Kenneth Hahn Hall, 500 W. Temple St.

**Los Angeles, C.A.** – There is a growing national conversation calling for independent civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies across the country. Local communities from Sonoma to St. Louis are fighting to create oversight bodies that have legal powers to enforce transparency from local law enforcement. Los Angeles is one such county with a sheriff's department that has evaded accountability and transparency in the wake of excessive and lethal force used on our communities.

For over two years the Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in Los Angeles Jails has been pushing the county supervisors to implement independent civilian oversight that is legally empowered to subpoena the sheriff's department. On Friday the county appointed working group charged with drafting the responsibilities, powers, and mission of the commission will be meeting to discuss the issue of subpoena power. The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence believes that empowering the commission with the power to subpoena documents and testimony from the sheriff's department is a non-negotiable.

"This working group exists because the community fought for a legally empowered oversight commission that could subpoena the sheriff's department," says Mark-Anthony Johnson, director of health and wellness at Dignity and Power Now. "Law enforcement can continue to violate our human rights because we have a legal structure that encourages that they operate with impunity. The largest sheriff's department in the country is no exception and it cannot be effectively investigated or held accountable without the legal framework in place to empower the commission. That means changing county charter. Today we call on those appointed to this working group to urge the county supervisors to initiate that process."

In addition to subpoena power, The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence believes that effective oversight of the sheriff's department cannot happen without the following non-negotiable characteristics: 1) that it be composed of 9 members, 5 appointed by the supervisors and 4 appointed from a list of nominees identified by the community, 2) it directs the functions of the Inspector General, 3) is comprised of no current or former law enforcement, 4) it has its own legal counsel. Coalition members and formerly incarcerated members of the community will be attending and giving comment to the working group meeting (9 a.m. -11a.m. in room 347.) **The press conference will take place at 11:15 a.m.** immediately after the working group meeting ends.

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