



New Report Shows Recent Sexual Abuse by Sheriff’s Deputy Not an Isolated Incident, Formerly Incarcerated Women Call For Change

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Los Angeles, CA – As the sheriff's department moves forward with investigating cases of sexual assault by one of its deputies, it’s important that the department and county not treat this as an isolated incident. It is clear from the denial of Officer Kreiman, the refusal of the District Attorney’s Office to file charges, and the use of cameras in jail facilities, that sexual violence against women by law enforcement is a cultural and systemic issue. The department is taking this issue seriously by launching an investigation, however, additional steps need to be taken to address these widespread abuses.

Earlier this year Dignity and Power Now (DPN) and Californians United for A Responsible Budget (CURB) released a report titled *Breaking the Silence which details the stories of seven women who have been incarcerated*. The report highlights various forms of violence including sexual harassment by medical staff in the Century Regional Detention Facility. In Los Angeles County there is little to no gender specific data on sheriff misconduct. The women in the report came forward to share their stories, but those who are incarcerated navigate the fear of retaliation for speaking up about neglect of their basic human rights.

This investigation into sexual abuse comes at a time where the county is assessing the impacts of constructing a new women's jail in Lancaster. While this assessment is focusing primarily on environmental impacts, the county is neglecting to include in its analysis the long term impacts on women of color – who make up the majority of the women's jail population – of building jails that produce a culture of violence against women. Many of those incarcerated in the jails could benefit from community based treatment, substance use programming, and permanent supportive housing. Diverting women to these types of programs rather continuing to incarcerate is the shift Los Angeles has the opportunity to take in a nation where sexual assault is the second most reported form of law enforcement misconduct.

"There is an immediate need to implement the sheriff’s department’s new civilian oversight commission – and implement it *effectively* – with formerly incarcerated women like myself sitting on it," said Michele Zorilla, campaign lead with Dignity and Power Now. “Many women who come out of CRDF no longer have the disposition or opportunity to speak out about what they’ve experienced. Appointing women to the commission who've seen and experienced the abusive conditions firsthand would go a long way towards protecting the rights of all women in Los Angeles County.”

For more information, please visit dignityandpowernow.org.