

Community Organizations Claim Their Victory After the Board of Supervisors' Vote to Implement Civilian Oversight

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Los Angeles, C.A. – For the past two and a half years hundreds of previously incarcerated people, families of those that have suffered from sheriff brutality, and members of the communities most affected by institutionalized violence have been campaigning for civilian oversight of the infamously violent and scandal-ridden Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department – and yesterday the Board of Supervisors voted 3–2 in favor of establishing a citizen's oversight commission.

The move came as a result of the work of Dignity and Power Now — whose motto reads, in part, “for all incarcerated people, their families, and communities” — and a coalition of community organizations that make up The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence. Heavily advocating for civilian oversight for the past two and a half years, they have brought together members of the community, held press conferences, met with supervisors, published comprehensive research reports, gave emotional testimony, used social media to educate the public, released several videos, and built a movement against sheriff violence in Los Angeles County.

In a video taken outside of the county Board of Supervisors' meeting yesterday posted on Dignity and Power Now's Facebook page, Executive Director Patrisse Cullors speaks to a large group of people, both young and old, and tells them to “claim their victory.” She continues, “A lot of us have lost our love ones to law enforcement, a lot of us have been terrorized and traumatized by law enforcement, so we should always claim our victories – and today is a victory. It's a long, hard won fight.”

A working group now has 90 days to come up with recommendations for the commission's mission, authority, size and structure. The group which includes representatives from each of the supervisors, as well as the Sheriff and Inspector General, currently excludes representatives from the Coalition to End Sheriff Violence – but the community who put this issue on the map say that those affected by sheriff violence deserve to be part of the solution. Their five nonnegotiable conditions include **there be at least nine members on the commission with four appointed by community organizations, independent legal council, no law enforcement or retired law enforcement serving on the commission, subpoena power, and that the commission guide the work of the Inspector General.**

For more information, please visit dignityandpowernow.org.