

## **Human Rights Demands Sent to Incoming Politicians Urging Them To End Sheriff Violence and Support Civilian Oversight**

### **For Immediate Release:**

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### **Contact:**

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**Los Angeles, C.A.** – As Los Angeles residents join together in an effort to establish a Civilian Review Board of the infamously violent and scandal-ridden Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, Dignity and Power Now — whose motto reads, in part, “for all incarcerated people, their families, and communities” — sent a letter today to Hilda Solis, Sheila Kuehl, and Bobby Shriver, candidates on this fall’s ballot for seats in the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, urging them to vote yes on a Civilian Review Board and demanding the board be free of corruption by adherence to five specified requirements.

A link to [this report](#) is included in the letter, which outlines a comprehensive model of civilian oversight of the Sheriff’s Department, synthesizes research of civilian oversight models across the country, and proposes that the Civilian Review Board will direct the functions of the Office of Inspector General while prioritizing the input of communities directly impacted by sheriff violence. The concept of community involvement is demonstrated in [this video](#), which was also included in the letter.

The letter places an emphasis on five nonnegotiable conditions for the proposed Civilian Review Board, which include there be at least nine members on the board, independent legal council, no law enforcement or retired law enforcement serving on the board, subpoena power and

independent investigative power, and that the board guide the work of the Inspector General.

“This winter the new County Board of Supervisors has the opportunity to finally do the right thing and be a champion for the people,” says Dignity and Power Now Executive Director Patrisse Cullors. “The incoming supervisors can help keep the Los Angeles community safe from sheriff violence and human rights abuses, both in and outside the county jails, by voting yes on civilian oversight and establishing a board free of corruption that is truly by the people and for the people.”

For more information, please visit [endsheriffviolence.org](http://endsheriffviolence.org).

**Dignity and Power Now’s letter to Solis, Kuehl, and Shriver follows.**

September 8, 2014

To: Hilda Solis, Sheila Kuehl, and Bobby Shriver

Dear Ms. Solis, Ms. Kuehl, and Mr. Shriver:

My brother was abused by sheriff deputies in the LA County Jails. He suffered a concussion, blacked out, and woke up in a pool of his own blood. After my family found out he was brutalized, we reached out for

help, but there was no one willing to investigate the violence and we received no explanation from the Sheriff's Department.

This is just one personal story out of the over seventy firsthand accounts that were given by the public in support of civilian oversight of the Sheriff's Department at the County Board of Supervisors meeting on August 5th, 2014. Despite the presence of over two hundred and fifty community members who advocated in favor of a Civilian Review Board and the strong support of both Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Gloria Molina, the motion failed to pass in a 3-2 vote.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is America's largest Sheriff's Department and 4th largest police force, operating the largest jail system in the world. A jail system that also serves as the country's largest caretaker of the mentally ill. Abuse, brutality, and scandal throughout the system have been rampant and well-documented, prompting numerous federal indictments and former Sheriff Lee Baca's retirement. Our *Coalition to End Sheriff Violence* has been advocating for civilian oversight since 2012. Since that time, fifty-one people have been killed by sheriff's deputies, a number which doesn't include in-custody deaths or the recent vehicular death of an innocent cyclist. No one was prosecuted in any of these cases.

As this report details, independent civilian oversight is a necessary tool for any movement fighting to end state violence at the scale at which it exists in Los Angeles County. Even with a new Sheriff and the creation of an Inspector General, there remains a need for a body of nonpolitical leaders, who are held in high regard by the community, and can focus exclusively on the time consuming task of LASD oversight.

**In order for the Civilian Review Board to fully serve the purpose of an uncorrupted body able to implement meaningful reform, the new board must: 1) be made up of nine members, five appointed by the**

**County Board of Supervisors, and four by community partners, 2) have independent legal council, 3) not have any law enforcement or retired law enforcement serving on the board, 4) have subpoena power and independent investigative power, 5) guide the work of the Inspector General.**

This winter the new County Board of Supervisors will have the opportunity to be a champion for the people and make history. As an incoming supervisor, you can help keep the Los Angeles community safe from sheriff violence and human rights abuses, both in and outside the county jails, by voting yes on civilian oversight and establishing a board that is truly by the people and for the people.

**Are you going to vote in favor of human rights and civilian oversight?**

**Are you willing to establish a board that meets the five necessary qualifications as outlined above?**

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Patrisse Cullors  
Executive Director, Dignity and Power Now

