

# Los Angeles County Supervisor Endorses Civilian Oversight of Los Angeles County Jails

Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails  
endsheriffviolence@gmail.com | www.endsheriffviolence.org  
| 213.375.4518 - English | 310.880.6855 – Spanish

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOS ANGELES, MAR. 22, 2013 – Close to 150 people came together on the evening of Mar. 14, 2013, to bare witness to both the violence and trauma of the Los Angeles County Jail system and the vision of an alternative model of managing what is currently the largest jail system in the United States. Veteran public servant and current Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas addressed the attendees and expressed his support for the idea of independent, civilian oversight of the Los Angeles County Jail system. The meeting was organized by the Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails, a grassroots multicultural organization which is bringing together community organizations, health providers, clergy, attorneys, community residents, friends and families and survivors of the brutality inside L.A. jails to fight for real accountability. In the past, Coalition founder and Lead Organizer Patrisse Cullors-Brignac has stated that, “The responsibility of holding the Sheriff’s accountable cannot be left to

the same department whose long standing negligence has allowed a culture of violence to shape the practice of jailing in Los Angeles.” Sup. Mark Ridley-Thomas stated his general agreement with this sentiment at the town hall-style meeting on Mar. 14, 2013:

“You cannot have accountability without oversight of police officers and the Sheriff’s Department cannot police itself ... In the meantime, the coalition needs to raise awareness and not back down.”

“County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas backs community forum on jail oversight,” Los Angeles Wave Newspapers, Mar. 15, 2013.

“Independent civilian oversight of the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department is fundamental to achieve modern, constitutional policing ... We don’t need another report to confirm the conditions within the jails. We need structural reform – caused by independent civilian oversight.

Constitutional policing must be a norm rather than an aspiration.”

“Group Seeks Oversight of County Jail: Demand is supported by County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas,” LA Watts Times newspaper, Mar. 21, 2013.

“They (the sheriff’s department) won’t feel pressure if no one’s watching, monitoring, overseeing and holding them accountable. We must push for this issue and don’t turn back because if you do, you are abandoning your post. Stand up and push until victory is won.”

“Coalition pushes for independent oversight of sheriff’s department,” Our Weekly newspaper, Mar. 21, 2013.

The Coalition believes that a People’s Civilian Review Board comprised wholly of citizens that 1) has subpoena power; 2) can review and investigate citizen complaints; and 3) can carry out disciplinary or policy action is the most independent citizen review model of accountability and transparency.

With optimism and enthusiasm, the Coalition looks forward to working with Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas and others to bring this model of civilian oversight to fruition in the city and county of Los Angeles.

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