

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 903009

September 10, 2021

Honorable Board of Supervisors,

We first wish to extend our appreciation to the Grand Jury for their review of available data and policies regarding bias in policing, use of force, and diversity within the Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO). This Grand Jury has recommended that our BOS establish an oversight board as prescribed by Assembly Bill 1185. A step in this direction is the BOS creation of the Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group (PSREAG), a Ventura County-wide board in which public safety and community stakeholders collaborate to improve communication and mutual understanding. This advisory group is committed to identifying constructive solutions to strengthening law enforcement policies, practices, and procedures. We also seek to promote law enforcement-community engagement. As an advisory group, we are committed to an ongoing assessment of the need for an oversight board as prescribed by Assembly Bill 1185.

Racial equity in policing specifically, and public safety in general, is highly nuanced and multi-layered. The Grand Jury investigation and its report were reasonable first steps towards bringing these issues to light. We believe that much more work needs to be done to develop a comprehensive picture of racial equity in public safety in Ventura County law enforcement.

The PSREAG thanks the Grand Jury for their dedicated service to Ventura County, and appreciates their hard work and time.

Respectfully submitted,

The Public Safety and Racial Equity Advisory Group

Sheriff Bill Ayub, Ventura County Sheriff
Erik Nasarenko, Ventura County District Attorney
Claudia Bautista, Ventura County Public Defender
Mark Varela, Ventura County Chief Probation Officer
Chief Jason Benites, Oxnard Police Chief
Rabiah Rahman and Damon Jenkins, Black Lawyers Ventura County
Bob Bland, Conejo Valley Interfaith Association
Tess Allen, Diversity Collective of Ventura County
Vanessa Benitez Valdez, Mexican American Bar Association
Genevieve Flores-Haro, Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project
Stacy Luney and Ron Robinson, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Ventura County
Vanessa Cortez, Pacific Clinics
Laura Espinoza and Cynthia Salas, Santa Paula Latino Townhall
Jessica Wan, Ventura County Asian American Bar Association
Cindy Liu and Aliche Chou, We Belong 805