COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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DONALD H. BLEVINS
Chief Probation Officer

June 29, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Donald H. Blevins
Chief Probation Officer

Subject: **DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENT STATUS REPORT (ITEM 17, AGENDA OF MARCH 23, 2010)**

On March 23, 2010, on motion of Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Antonovich, the Board instructed the Interim Chief Probation Officer, Cal Remington, to report to the Board within 60 days following my assumption of duties as the Chief Probation Officer, detailing his assessment and recommendations regarding the overall management and administration of the Probation Department. The report is to also include Mr. Remington's assessment and recommendations as to the Juvenile Halls, Camps and ongoing programmatic and educational efforts therein. I began my tenure as Chief Probation Officer on April 19, 2010. Consequently, the report was due to your Board by June 21, 2010.

Action Taken to Date

This is to provide your Board with a status report on the work completed to date and to advise you that the final report will be provided to your Board by July 15, 2010. Mr. Remington has prepared a draft report based on his assessment of the overall management and administration of the Department, which includes numerous recommendations to address the deficiencies that have been identified. Although a draft report has been completed, Mr. Remington needs additional time to ensure that a thorough report is provided to your Board that includes consideration of findings and recommendations made by consultants obtained by the County to conduct a study of the Probation camps. The consultants' final report is anticipated to be received by July 9, 2010.

Mr. Remington's assessments and recommendations are based on his observations and discussions with various stakeholders as the Acting Chief Probation Officer and currently, as the Department's Chief Deputy. He has reviewed substantial documentation and has conducted many site visits of the Department's facilities where he has interviewed staff regarding matters that are of concern in various areas of the Department. In addition, he has recently provided the opportunity for middle managers, supervisors and other staff to express their concerns and has requested their input on potential solutions or changes that could benefit departmental operations.

Many of the identified critical deficiencies have recently begun being addressed through various administrative and operational actions under the direction of new departmental management. For example, regarding the administrative actions taken, the Department has imposed tighter controls on spending in discretionary areas of the Services and Supplies budget which has contributed to partially reducing the current-year overexpenditure. In addition, in an effort to develop an accurate Departmental Item Control, the following actions have occurred:

- The Department has imposed a temporary freeze on all manager and staff movements within Probation effective March 15, 2010, unless approved by the Chief Probation Officer.
- On April 1, 2010, an Item Control was sent to Probation managers to identify discrepancies between the Item Control and staff's actual work locations.
- Unannounced payoffs were conducted on April 15, 2010 by the Department of Human Resources at Downey Headquarters and on June 15, 2010, by the Auditor-Controller (A-C) at four area offices (Alhambra, Central Adult Investigations and Central Records, San Gabriel Valley and South Central). The unannounced payoffs required employees to pick up paychecks or direct deposit notices after they presented a form of identification and were asked questions about their specific work assignments to gather the information needed to develop an accurate Item Control and to verify information previously provided by managers for their assigned employees.
- A new departmental Pay Location structure and Work Site structure was developed in June 2010. Department of Human Resources staff and Probation Special Assistants identified where each Probation employee is believed to work and receive their paycheck. Auditor-Controller representatives updated employee information in CWTAPPS based on the identified work assignments and work locations.
- From June 29, 2010 through July 7, 2010, a team of employees from various County Departments lead by A-C and Chief Executive Office representatives will be interviewing all Probation employees and gathering the same information as gathered during the previous payoffs. Discrepancies will be researched by the A-C and all employees receiving paychecks validated as legitimate Probation Employees. Information gathered from these interviews

and the payoffs will be analyzed and used to develop an accurate Department Item Control.

- New processes and procedures will be developed and implemented to ensure the continued accuracy of the newly developed Item Control.

The following are some examples of key operational actions taken thus far:

- The Department has been working towards reducing the juvenile hall population through the implementation of various measures, such as more community-based alternatives for those youth who can be safely maintained in the community. This has reduced the population of approximately 1,500 in FY 2008-09 to 1,300 in FY 2009-10. With fewer youth to supervise, the need for overtime has decreased. This, along with the successful implementation of ProbStat, an accountability system which enables management to monitor overtime expenditures on a weekly basis in the juvenile halls and camps, has contributed towards a significant reduction in overtime.
- The Department is currently reviewing the level of supervision provided to Level 3 minors (minors who have been identified through a mental health assessment to be suicidal). The Los Angeles County Probation Department is the only known probation department that currently provides 1:1 staff-to-minor ratio or greater supervision of these minors. Statistics reveal that the national suicide rate of minors in juvenile halls is relatively rare. Consequently, a 1:1 level of supervision on a 24-7 basis may not be programmatically necessary or cost effective.
- On June 23, 2010, during the Department's Executive Leadership Team meeting, priority needs were discussed, specifically to determine the potential for reallocating existing staff to areas within the Department that currently have a greater need. Such examples include achieving compliance with the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement pertaining to the juvenile camps, partially mitigating the over-hire situation at the juvenile halls, implementing the Digital Dashboard System, and implementation of SB 678, the Evidence-Based Probation Supervision Program administered by the California Emergency Management Agency.

Some of the problems are less complicated and simply require changes in policies and procedures such as involving all managers in budget development and developing a process to ensure managers monitor budget expenditures on a monthly basis. Other problems are systemic in nature and will require much more time and effort, and possibly additional resources to resolve, such as reviewing and auditing all functions in the Administrative Services Bureau as well as implementing the Office of Independent Review's recommendations as noted in their June 2, 2010 report. Although there are departmental practices and procedures which have developed over many years and are within a departmental culture that is by nature resistant to change, such resistance can

be overcome as many staff and managers appear to be supportive of change to improve the Department.

Consultants' Final Camp Assessment Report

As previously indicated to your Board, two expert consultants were retained to assist Mr. Remington in assessing the overall management and administration of the Department's 18 probation camps and the Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC). The consultants are retired Chief Probation Officers of other counties who combined have over 60 years of professional experience in the probation field.

The consultants were to conduct a comprehensive study of the capacity and staffing of the Probation Department's 18 camps and DKC. The consultants have prepared a draft report for review and anticipate finalizing it by July 9, 2010. Mr. Remington will need to review and analyze the suggested recommendations to further incorporate such findings in his assessment. As of this date, the consultants have drafted a report that is in the process of being finalized by July 9, 2010 which includes the following key elements and recommendations based on completed actions, including:

- Developed two plans -- a written assessment plan and action plan that have been formally approved by the Department for proceeding as specified in the assessment plan.
- Conducted site visits of all Probation camps to obtain first hand knowledge of camp operations and be able to obtain input from on-site staff and managers.
- Reviewed demographic data and incidents within the camps to identify important trends.
- Reviewed the Corrections Standards Authority and Probation Department's rated bed capacity data based on all camps, including the juvenile halls, to determine the appropriate rated bed capacity.
- Interviewed camp Directors to obtain their perspective and input regarding improving the day-to-day camp operations and identifying efficiencies.
- Reviewed the staffing patterns for each of the camps and provides recommendations to increase efficiencies and service levels within camp operations.
- Reviewed data on the usage of sick-leave, leave pursuant to Labor Code Section 4850, staff injuries, industrial accidents, and their impact on camp operations.
- Reviewed camp-related policies and procedures to determine their efficacy as they relate to performance outcomes and effective operation of camps.
- Reviewed the authority exercised by Directors and Supervising Deputy Probation Officers.

- Identified potential efficiencies that can be achieved through cost-effective alternatives to the resources being expended on the Department's current methods and practices used to transport minors to and from medical appointments.

Mr. Remington's final report detailing his assessment and recommendations regarding the overall management and administration of the Probation Department will be submitted to your Board by July 15, 2010.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information, or your staff may contact Cal Remington, Chief Deputy, at (562) 940-2851.

DHB:yb

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller

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