

PROBATION E-GRAM



Official publication, L.A. County Probation Officers Union, Local 685, AFSCME/AFL-CIO.

June 1, 2017

What Are People Saying About AB 109?

AB 109 is the "Talk of the Town" after alleged cop killer and long time gang member, Michael C. Mejia, was released from Pelican Bay Prison under AB 109. Mejia now stands accused of committing two murders, including the murder of Whittier police officer Keith Boyer in February. The media have recently been taking a "bite" out of AB 109.



In a telephone interview with [Breitbart News](#), Michele Hanisee, President of the Association of LA Deputy District Attorneys, said, "Under the old system, [Mejia] would not have been out there to kill Officer Boyer. Simple as that," she said. "Mejia would have been thrown back into state prison for a full year for any one of the five - yes, count 'em - five violations he committed after being released."

Tragically, Mejia's final probation violation occurred on February 2, 2017 - only 18 days before Officer Boyer's murder. If only AB 109 had not restricted law enforcement from sending Mejia back behind bars for a longer period of time than 10 days for his repeated violations, Officer Boyer might be alive today.

Instead, thanks to AB 109 "reform," Mejia was only required to report to LA County Probation under the newly-created program known as "Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS)." Under AB 109, probation violations are limited to a 10-day maximum "flash incarceration."

Hanisee recently condemned AB 109 in the harshest possible terms on 790 KABC's McIntyre in the Morning show, according to a local affiliate of ABC in Los Angeles (KABC 7).

"If you open these profiles and read them, every time it says, 'This individual was qualified to be released to the supervision of probation under AB 109 because their current commitment offense is defined as non-serious, non-violent.'"

She says AB 109, like Propositions 47 and 57, was sold to the public by the politicians. "And they also give them really catchy names like 'Public Safety Realignment Act' rather than 'Transfer Dangerous Felons to Your Jurisdiction Supervision Act.'"

Hanisee says AB 109 continues to threaten public safety, citing the descriptions of the 120 persons currently on the "L.A.'s Most Wanted." "This is a great place to commit crime. You're going to get off easy and you're going to get out early if you go in."

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Calendar of Events

JUNE

General Membership Meeting:
June 8; 7:30 PM

Stewards Meeting: June 29,
7:30 PM

JULY

General Membership Meeting:
July 13; 7:30 PM

**Scholarship &
Awards Banquet: July 14
6:00 PM**

Stewards Meeting: July 27,
7:30 PM

AUGUST

General Membership Meeting:
Aug. 10; 7:30 PM

Stewards Meeting: Aug. 31,
7:30 PM

Send Us Your Stories!

We welcome any story ideas - anything from success with a probationer, to the birth of a child or retirement of a co-worker, to the effect of staffing shortages or workload requirements on your ability to do your job.

Please email your story ideas to Cookie Lommel

[Read more](#) about AB 109.

Changing How Juvenile Offenders will be Charged Under Prop 57

From Oakland North, UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism

Local and state agencies are grappling with the complexities of putting Prop 57 into effect and debating the effects it will have on prisoners and juvenile offenders' chances of re-offending.

Maureen Washburn, a policy analyst for the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ), a San Francisco based non-profit that works to decrease the need for incarceration, said that one of the immediate changes following the passage of Prop 57 is eliminating "direct file" for youth offenders. Direct file is when the state gives prosecutors the power to file charges against juveniles within adult criminal courts instead of juvenile courts.

Since 1976, California has allowed people as young as 16 to be sent to adult courts and facilities. Since 2003, over 10,000 youth offenders were prosecuted in adult courts, and nearly 70 percent of those cases were a result of direct file, according to the CJCJ report "The Prosecution of Youth as Adults: A County Level Analysis of Prosecutorial Direct File Direct in California and Its Disparate Impact on Youth of Color."

Washburn said that the juvenile justice system is generally oriented towards rehabilitation over punishment. "When a young person is processed in a juvenile court instead of an adult one, they are more likely to have their case and life circumstances considered by a judge who has more exposure to juvenile cases and who may be steeped in a rehabilitative mindset," she said.

[Read More.....](#)

The La Mirada Probation Cancer Warriors

There is still time to participate in the American Cancer Society Relay by [donating funds](#) to honor all of our brothers and sisters, co-workers, friends, and family who have fought valiant battles against cancer.

Our Probation Department friends and family have, for many years, joined with retired Director Randy Herbon and his wife Joyce in raising funds with the America Cancer Society Relay event held at the La Mirada Water Park. Many of those who attended said it was the best relay venue anywhere. Retired Director Andrea Gordon and Cris Diaz are also a part of this team that sings the praises of this group.

The Relay, which was held Saturday, May 20, 2017, offered 24 hours of fun and activities while raising funds to fight cancer, to help support our loved ones battling the



at clommel@afscme685.com.

[Email story ideas!](#)

Member Benefits

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- * Health Club Discounts
- * Vacation Tours
- * AFSCME Credit Card

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Scholarships

Several scholarship programs are available for AFSCME members and their children. Select an individual scholarship for information on requirements and deadlines.

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Our union is only as strong as our activist core. That's why AFSCME is dedicated to working with our affiliates to provide high-quality training for AFSCME leaders.

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- See available self-paced courses
- Investor education for working families

Classroom Learning

- See AFSCME programs for info

Women's Leadership & Training

Additional Resources

[Click here for details](#)

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disease, and to honor survivors, caregivers, and those who lost their battle. The La Mirada Relay for Life event has raised, so far, a total at this time of \$105,020!!

Remember, that you can continue bringing in the donations until August 30, 2017!

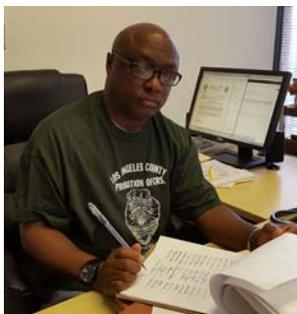
[Click here to donate.](#)

Thank you La Mirada Relayers, you are awesome!!

Special Representative Stacy Ford Attends SCOPO Meeting in San Francisco

by Stacy Ford

On May 19, I had the opportunity to attend the quarterly State Coalition of Probation Organizations (SCOPO) meeting, which was held in San Francisco. SCOPO was formed in 1983 by line DPOs in several counties that were leaders of their local probation associations or unions. These people believed there was great need for a statewide organization that would speak for the interests of the line probation officer and institutional counselor (DSOs for LA County).



Some of the unions or associations belonging to SCOPO are independent, while others - like Local 685 - are affiliated with international unions. The purpose of Local 685 attending SCOPO meetings is to hear and share information as it relates to probation and to hear updates or current bills being introduced in the California Legislature as they relate to probation. At the May SCOPO meeting, Assembly members David Chui (D- San Francisco) and Assemblymen Scott Wiener (D- San Francisco) were guest speakers.

Counties represented at the meeting included Ventura, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Monterey, Orange, Sacramento County, San Diego, San Joaquin, and San Bernardino counties. My favorite time during this all-day meeting is the round table, where each representative gives a report on what's going on in their probation departments.

As I listened to each representative give their report on the working conditions in their departments, my thought was "WOW!" We think we have it bad at LA County Probation, but from what I heard, I can truly say that I am thankful to be employed by LA County Probation Department, even with all the BULL that's going on in the Camps and Halls. We are blessed.

As I spoke with other union reps about officer representation and I shared how Local 685 operates, they were amazed at how we are structured:

- How 685 members can attend a union meeting and meet with the union president without an appointment;
- How 685 members can call for representation by calling a rep on his or her cell phone without going through union headquarters; and
- How 685 reps are usually available on the spot to deal with situations as they occur.

As I discussed our grievance process and the benefits in our MOU, again, they were amazed. What I took from that round table was that although we are probation officers in different counties from around California, we all have some of the same problems:

- Officers are being attacked by minors on a regular basis;
- Officers in the Halls and Camps are being held over almost every day on every shift;
- Officers are working out of class without any recognition; and
- There are officer shortages like crazy and officers are carrying the load of at least two officers.

In some counties, when the officer calls out there is no movement and control to send back up officers to cover - whoever is there will run that unit. There is a huge problem between officers and management. Unlike for us, their supervisor can fire them just like that, without the process required in the Local 685 union contract. There are so many issues that our brothers and sisters are facing with their departments - it's just insane!

One thing we all have in common: the minors are in control. Officers are losing their probation jobs due to complaints made by minors, their parents, and child advocates. We're not the only department that has a ton of officers under investigation or on post. Everything that we're experiencing here at LA County Probation is not isolated to LA County only; it's a California issue and it may even be a national issue. We are all dealing with some of the same issues across the state.

Often times I read (you know on that one anti-685 website, you know the one that some of you express how you feel. You know the website where you talk about what's going on in your unit or facility and how 685 is doing nothing) that website, LOL... As I was saying, often times I read some of the lies and other stuff that officers post about our working conditions. I have to agree that what we are experiencing in probation today is ludicrous. But to say that Local 685 is doing nothing is not factual. As with other counties around the state, we all have a common goal, and that's to save our jobs and improve our work conditions.

Another thing that was pointed out in the meeting was how officers do not attend their local union meetings and are not well informed about the fights that their unions are in. Unlike 685, some of those unions don't have a bi-monthly e-gram or monthly meeting to inform their members of their activities. I want to encourage all of our members to get involved and help YOUR union fight these battles.

I received a call from a Camp staff member who was complaining that she didn't have time on the schedule to do her court report and had to do it at home. I asked, "Why are you doing a court report at home? If case work isn't on the schedule, that tells me it's not a priority and I suggest you follow the schedule. If you leave your post to complete a court report that's not on the schedule, you will face some level of discipline for abandonment of post."

Here's another call I got from an officer, "We were short staff so I couldn't use the rest room throughout my shift. I don't want any problems but can the union do something." WOW!

With all these probation departments across the state, there are good and bad situations. Some of them have safety retirement. Others don't. Some have low pay wages; others have higher pay. Some have contracts like a 2 percent increase in pay over three years; others have

10 percent plus a 5.5 percent bonus, plus an increase in the uniform allowance from \$500-850.

I'm just saying..... Sometimes the grass is not as good on the other side of the fence as it looks. Let's appreciate what we have and who we have at the table fighting on our behalf. Stop complaining about stupid stuff and fight for things like better pay and safer working conditions. When I returned home from the meeting, all I could think about was how blessed I am, even being under investigation as my current situation. I'm still blessed. Thanks to my union, I have a process that will allow me to fight the allegations.

Celebrating Foster Care Awareness Month

LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis helped celebrate Foster Care Month with a presentation of a scroll to DPOs Alan Brown and Claire Roberson. Her recognition highlighted their annual Youth Development Services College Summit for probation foster youth. The College Summit was applauded for outstanding work with current foster and emancipated foster youth.



February 2017 marked the 4th Annual College Summit event. It was the biggest one ever, with over 40 colleges and 30 community-based organizations in attendance. The College Summit provides a full range of services that support current and emancipated foster in their transition to higher education. College Summit connects foster and emancipated youth with the actual Campus Foster Youth Services liaisons who will work with them when they arrive on Campus.

DPO Roberson partnered with DPO Brown when she came to Youth Development Services in the Probation Department in 2012. DPO Brown took the lead to create a program in which probation foster youth could receive better insight and understanding into the best ways to entering community colleges and universities, and to provide them with the tools access grants and graduate from college. DPO Roberson was inspired by this idea and joined in to shape and mold these efforts.



(L-R) DPO Alan Brown and Founder of the College Summit; Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald; DPO Claire Roberson, co-Founder of College Summit; and DPO Kedra Felix-Bracken, co-Founder of the College Summit.

YDS College Summit is dedicated to transforming the

lives of probation foster youth by educating and connecting them to colleges, universities and career resources. The College Summit Planning Forum is comprised primarily of former probation foster youth who are attending college. The major goal of YDS College Summit is to increase college enrollment and graduation rates among Probation foster youth. More importantly, the Foster Youth Liaisons will continue to assist them throughout their college career.



Probation Seeks to Add Educational Programs for Juveniles

From Youth Today

An audit conducted by the Violence Intervention Program interviewed 104 youth in the probation Camps. The study revealed that juveniles want more educational opportunities, before and after graduation. These ranged from preparation classes for the SAT to college courses to graphic design classes. While some of these classes are available at some of the Camps, they are not given at all the Camps, the report claimed.

Probation officials commented in their response to the report that the Department is working to create more programming for its graduates due to the audit's findings. This includes implementing more college-level courses, an area the Department is actively seeking to expand. One school also has a pilot program that aims to prepare students who have graduated to enter the workforce.

Interestingly, the majority of these juveniles surveyed planned to go to college, either a two-year or a four-year school, after receiving their diplomas or GEDs. Another 18 percent wanted to go to trade school.

According to the report's authors, the youth they surveyed enjoyed college courses when they were offered, "especially high school graduates." Yet few college classes are actually available in the Camps. More than 120 students in the County's juvenile residential facilities are currently enrolled in these classes, but the courses are only offered at the Dorothy Kirby Center location and for the five Camps at the Challenger Memorial Youth Center.



One program the Probation Department offers is a book club, which works in collaboration with the LA Public Library. The Probation Department also reportedly offers work programs that can allow youth to gain work experience and earn a paycheck. Other programs listed include:

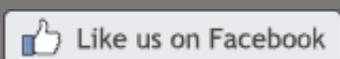
- Personal Enrichment Training, in which youth "work in small groups with Operation READ staff to explore careers, obtain life skills, and gain an understanding of work ethics and financial literacy," and
- Achieve 3000, an online tool that delivers daily instruction for nonfiction reading and writing tailored for each individual.

Probation staff explained that the reality is that most of these kids are just doing their best to earn regular high school credits, because most of the kids who wind up in the Camps have fallen so far behind.

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