



January 4, 2016

Change Is In The Air As Supervisors Consider Splitting Probation Department

On Dec. 29, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the L.A. County Board of Supervisors are considering splitting the Probation Department into two, juvenile and adult:

"Amid turmoil at the Los Angeles County probation department, some elected officials and juvenile justice reform advocates are pushing a proposal that would split the sprawling agency in two parts, one for overseeing minors in trouble with the law and one for adults." [Click here](#) to read the article.

Local 685 President Ralph Miller was quoted in the *LA Times* article:

"Ralph Miller, president of the probation officers' union - which was at odds with Powers - said he thought such a split was unnecessary and would only result in "competing budgets and just fracturing things. It would be too disruptive," he said. "We've been through enough stuff... You properly train and equip and support people and the rest will kind of work out by itself."

Every crisis is an opportunity and the current state of our Department is no exception. Stay tuned early in the new year to hear of our plans to put Local 685 members' voices up front in the debate!

In This Issue...

[Change Is In The Air Powers' Severance](#)
[Sail Future Odyssey](#)
[When Experience Doesn't Equal Promotion](#)
[Top 10 Events of 2015](#)
[AFSCME Advantage Benefits](#)

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 at clommel@afscme685.com.

[Email story ideas!](#)

Member Benefits

AFSCME Advantage

Discounts and benefits for AFSCME members that can help stretch your dollars and make life a little easier.

- * AT&T Wireless Discounts
- * Energy Efficient Rebates
- * Health Club Discounts
- * Vacation Tours
- * AFSCME Credit Card



Local 685 President Ralph Miller and SDPO President Jim Schoengarth join new County CEO Sachi Hamai as she is appointed to office

LA Times Reports...

Departing L.A. County probation chief set to receive nearly \$295,000 severance

"Los Angeles County supervisors agreed to pay Probation Department chief Jerry Powers at least \$294,251 in severance when he resigned earlier this month amid an investigation into allegations that he misused his hiring authority to employ his alleged mistress."



- Source: *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 30, 2015

[Click here to read LA Times story](#)

Sail Future Odyssey: Prison Isn't Our Only Option!

As probation officers, we consistently make suggestions to our clients to participate in programs that we hope will assist them in improving their life path. DPO Marsanell Paige was elated when DJJ Ward Aeron Brown called to let her know that he would be leaving to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to Spain and Morocco through a program she had suggested called **Sail Future Odyssey**. She had really worked with this young man, first sending him to "Inside Out Writers," then she pushed him to participate in writing an essay to receive a scholarship. And then he was one of the recipients of our AFSCME Local 685



[Click here for details](#)

Scholarships

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

[Click here for details](#)

Education & Trainings

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.

Online Learning

- See upcoming live online workshops
- See available self-paced courses
- Investor education for working families

Classroom Learning

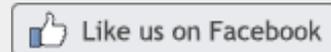
- See AFSCME / National Labor College programs

Women's Leadership & Training

Additional Resources

[Click here for details](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



Annual Awards Banquet youth scholarships!

Aeron Brown described his experience as follows: "I got on a plane from LAX the day after Sail Futures called me. They believe that "transformational change takes transformational experiences," so they use the open sea and open water as an alternative to youth incarceration. This part of the organization was to prove the point that youth are redeemable, that we can change.

"We had workshops in Baltimore, Washington D. C. We met with staff of the Annie Casey Foundation, the Harry S. Truman Foundation, and Clowns Without Borders. We sailed with the Baltimore Police Department. Our group did about 10 or 11 service projects in different cities on the east coast and overseas. We visited a girls' juvenile rehabilitation facility in Casablanca and played a game of basketball with them. The point of all of this wasn't just for sight-seeing and reform workshops; we were training to sail across the Atlantic to Spain!"



Sail Future Odyssey's model is to dismantle the belief that the only way to hold a juvenile offender accountable and protect a community is by putting kids in prison. By utilizing the ocean as a natural confinement tool, a program called Sail Futures Odyssey allows prosecutors and judges to hold youth accountable and remove them from their communities without utilizing prisons.

Jail doesn't work: 75% of youth reoffend and return to prison within a year of their release. Sail Future Odyssey represents a new way of thinking about juvenile rehabilitation and is pioneering the field of "alternative incarceration."

After conferring with judges and public defenders, Sail Future Odyssey was launched as an alternative to sending youthful offenders to prison. Instead of jail, judges can send their toughest cases to Sail Future, where they live and work on a racing vessel while earning their GED, participating in global service projects, and receiving daily counseling and vocational training. The open ocean acts a secure confinement tool that removes youth from their communities while serving as a great platform for personal growth and development.

When Experience Doesn't = Promotion...

DSO Frank Neely's nine years at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile

Hall is a wonderful example of how "Experience causes our life to move forward, by the skills we have acquired." In the nine years he has been in the Probation Department, Neely has worked in several units and assignments at Barry J., including the Compound Unit, Grievance/School Auditor, and for the last four years in the Boys' Specialized Handling Unit, gaining well-rounded probation experience.



Throughout this time, he has received "Very Good" and "Excellent" evaluations and letters of appreciation from his supervisor. Being a devoted staff member, he has implemented certain tactics and safety procedures within his unit that have now become daily mandatory practices.

"I believe that the title "Board Counselor" is exactly that, emphasis on the word "Counselor." Each day I counsel kids assigned to my unit, whether on Level 3 status or modified regarding their daily behavior," explains DSO Neely.

DSO Neely is quick to point to the high amount of respect he has for the co-workers in his unit. He mentions that he has never been under investigation, never been on certified time, or in any type of trouble. When he applied for Probation, he had and still has many aspiring goals. One of those goals was and is to move up through the promotional process and eventually promote through the Department.

At this point, he has applied for the DPO I position many times and was always placed in Band One. Each time, DSO Neely has been placed in Band One, but the County has held each time on the list for one year of eligibility. Eventually, after that one year passes, the County has hired those that were still eligible on the list and applied after he did. That was frustrating enough, but NOW, with this new system of hiring, he feels once again his career has been stagnated with bureaucracy.

Experience must be valued!!!! With this new promotional system of hiring people "off the street," the County has pushed aside or ignored experienced staff. That's years of WELL-NEEDED experience being ignored and even disrespected by the County many probation officers feel!

Experience is mandatory in the Camps!

The new process of hiring for the DPO1 position is simply based off of a written test. This test does not include any of the current knowledge of Directives or Policy, knowledge that is essential to the success of the careers of all officers and mandatory for the safety and security of all detainees in the camps. These hiring practices are not based off merit and all of the excellent evaluations earned by current staff don't equate to anything.

Many officers feel that it makes no sense. There have been officers that have worked the Halls for less than three months that have been promoted to camp before experienced officers that have been in the halls for years.

Seniority, professionalism, good attendance, and good/excellent evaluations and above all EXPERIENCE must be valued within this department.

Working: Top 10 Events of 2015

From the Huffington Post, Dec. 30, 2015



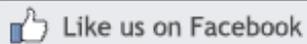
Historians may remember 2015 as the year of the minimum wage - and for good reason. Twenty-one states and multiple cities raised the minimum wage in the past 12 months, scarcely two years after the "Fight for 15" was dismissed as a pipe dream by some observers. The past year also saw other major advances for working Americans.

[Click here](#) to read about ten of the most important events of 2015.

AFSCME Local 685® 3701 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 510, Los Angeles, CA 90057

www.AFSCMELocal685.com

(213) 386-5860



Copyright © 20XX. All Rights Reserved.