

PROBATION E-GRAM



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

February 29, 2016

Coalition of Probation Unions Responds to the Los Angeles Times

The following letter was sent to the *Los Angeles Times* in response to "[L.A. County spends more than \\$233.00 a year to hold each you in juvenile lockup.](#)"

The letter was signed by the Coalition of Probation Unions representing L.A. County Probation Department's Clerical & Support Staff, Correction & Field Deputies, and Supervisors & Directors:

- Local 685 - AFSCME: Ralph Miller, President
- Local 1967 - AFSCME: Andrea Gordon, President
- BU 702 - SEIU 721 Joint Council: Jim Schoengarth, President
- SEIU Local 721: Bob Schoonover, President

DATE: February 29, 2016
TO: Garrett Therolf, Los Angeles Times
FROM: Coalition of Probation Unions
RE: L.A. County spends more than \$233,000 a year to hold each youth in juvenile lockup

On behalf of more than 6,000 sworn and civilian LA County Probation Department employees, we find the remarks by Probation Commissioner Jacqueline Caster to be disrespectful to the hard working peace officers and civilians who risk our lives to protect the public and rehabilitate juveniles and adults, and demonstrative of a lack of understanding of the challenges facing the Department and the communities we serve. The facts are as follows:

- There are approximately 1,500 vacant positions in the Probation Department - and a surplus of more than \$100 Million due to these vacancies - due to the mismanagement of the former Chief Probation Officer, who failed to fill these positions and utilize the resources allocated to the Department under his watch.
- If lower staffing levels were warranted in the Halls and Camps, management would be eliminating those vacancies and returning the funds to the State. They have not. Instead, the Department has

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Calendar of Events

General Membership Meeting:

Thursday, March 10, 2016
7:30 PM

Shop Steward's Meeting:

Thursday, March 31, 2016
7:30 PM

Meetings are held at the Local 685 office:

3701 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 510
Los Angeles, CA 90010

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

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launched a paid advertising campaign to fill the vacancies.

- The Department has methodically lowered the population of youth in the Halls and Camps by shifting juveniles to community supervision. Those that remain are among the toughest to turn around and the most dangerous to monitor due to mental illness, substance abuse, and other behavioral issues. Gang affiliations are the norm not the exception, and Probation staff inside the Halls and Camps coordinate closely with officers in the field who supervise juveniles and adults in a complex web of relationships.

Although we always appreciate the input of philanthropists like Mrs. Caster who are appointed by the County Supervisors to sit on the Probation Commission, LA Times readers must realize that these Commissioners are not subject matter experts - just opinionated citizens. Our doors are open and we encourage Mrs. Caster and the other Commissioners to learn the facts by talking with us. With 1,500 vacancies resulting in high caseloads, well above what experts recommend, we are doing our best to rehabilitate juveniles and adults and protect the public.

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