



LIBERTY | JUSTICE | EQUALITY

January 18, 2012

Via e-mail

Sheriff Leroy Baca
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169

Dear Sheriff Baca:

Thank you for meeting with us last week. We are encouraged by your stated commitment to end the longstanding pattern of deputy-on-inmate violence in the Jails and we appreciate the interest you expressed in an ongoing dialogue with the ACLU.

The ACLU will file a class action federal lawsuit today against the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, seeking a permanent injunction to require the Department to implement remedial measures adequate to put an end to deputy-on-inmate violence. We hope that our decision to file suit will not interrupt the dialogue that began last week between the ACLU and the LASD. We were impressed by the determination you expressed in that meeting to bring about far-reaching reforms in the Jails' culture, and by your assurance that you intend to devote the necessary energy and attention to this difficult task. We are encouraged to hear that you have already communicated your intentions to your custodial staff in the Jails, and to their supervisors up the chain of command.

We hope you will understand that despite our belief in your good intentions and in the genuineness of your resolve, the ACLU can't delay any longer in seeking the assistance of the federal court on behalf of the inmates. In our view, you and your command staff could have - and should have -- implemented years ago many of the remedial measures you are only now proposing to undertake under the glare of the media spotlight. For example, it has been nearly four years since the ACLU's psychiatric expert in *Rutherford*, Dr. Terry Kupers, found it likely that deputies were targeting mentally ill prisoners for violent abuse, and he recommended a number of remedies. (Dr. Kupers' report is available at <http://www.aclu-sc.org/documents/view/173>).

LASD ignored his proposals for four years, until the Los Angeles Times reported last week on the abuse that deputies in L.A. County Jails inflict on the mentally ill. And it was only then you came up with a remedial plan that mirrors some of Dr. Kupers's recommendations, but four years late, and after countless mentally ill inmates had been subjected to brutal mistreatment by

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deputies.

We believe that an injunction issued by a federal court will be an indispensable tool to assure that the reforms you envision, and ones you say you would like to implement but do not yet have the funding for, are implemented. An injunction will help ensure that Department receives the resources it needs to make the reforms permanent. And given the strong commitment to reform that you've expressed, there seems reason to hope that the ACLU and the LASD will ultimately be able to work together to make the LA County jails safe and humane.

Sincerely,



Margaret Winter
Associate Director
ACLU National Prison Project



Peter Eliasberg
Legal Director
ACLU of Southern California

