

ASSOCIATION FOR LOS ANGELES DEPUTY SHERIFFS; CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISORS ORGANIZATION; CALIFORNIA FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE; CALIFORNIA NARCOTIC OFFICERS ASSOCIATION; CALIFORNIA PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION; CALIFORNIA POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION; CALIFORNIA STATE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION; LONG BEACH POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION; LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROFESSIONAL PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION; LOS ANGELES POLICE PROTECTIVE LEAGUE; RIVERSIDE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION; SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF; SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF; SANTA ANA POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

LAW ENFORCEMENT OPPOSITION TO LAO “ALTERNATIVE BUDGET” PROPOSAL

The law enforcement community respectfully, but unambiguously, opposes the Legislative Analyst Office’s so-called “alternative budget” proposal. This proposal will have a negative impact on local public safety. Although the LAO proposal increases the burdens on local government by requiring probation to take over parole services, it actually wipes out on the ground public safety services needed to assure the public’s safety.

The LAO proposal zeroes out the COPS program, the Booking Fee Solution funding, and the Rural Sheriff program. The aggregate impact of these three program terminations will result in the loss of nearly a thousand peace officers statewide. Further, the elimination of the Booking Fee Solution funding has the effect of reviving the controversial and divisive booking fee statutory scheme.

In addition, the LAO proposal robs Peter to pay Paul by providing for probation’s additional parole responsibilities to be paid by the city share of Proposition 172 public safety funding. The LAO assertion that cutting the Proposition 172 funding amounts to the cutting of “extra programs” is simply groundless, since Proposition 172 was originally designed to back-fill cities and counties for property tax revenue losses incurred during fiscal 1993-1994 when the state took local government revenues to balance its budget.

No matter who does parole services – CDCR or probation – the on the ground reality is that police officers and deputy sheriffs often have the burden of dealing with parolees. By hollowing out critical funding for front-line law enforcement services, the LAO proposal does public safety a grave disservice.

The LAO suggestion that all wobblers be reduced to straight misdemeanors will, quite apart from the bad public safety policy inherent in such a suggestion, actually result in increased costs to prosecutors, since defendants will be more likely to take their cases to trial where they would have otherwise pled their case out where they were looking at a possible felony conviction.

The LAO proposal is bad for the communities we are sworn to protect and that you are elected to represent – its public safety elements should be categorically rejected.

Submitted to all Legislators on March 4, 2008