

DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY



The Strength Behind the Badge

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Honorable Nora Vargas
Chair, San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

September 21, 2023

Dear Chairperson Nora Vargas:

Thank you for meeting with us to discuss the impact of SDSA's mandatory overtime policy. The DSA has proposed to end the policy and has presented solutions to alleviate the staffing crisis generally by creating incentives for "hard to fill" shifts.

As we discussed, in addition to serious negative impacts on morale and the health and wellness of our deputies, Mandatory overtime is making SDSA's retention crisis worse.

Even with the considerable success with the recruitment of deputies, personnel losses continue to fall behind recruitment gains. Over the past 24 months, the department hired 475 new deputies, but lost 591 deputies over the same period, a net loss of 116 deputies. This added to the already understaffed department makes the ending of MOT a near impossibility if we do not create incentives.

DSA has made specific proposals to incentivize voluntary overtime at chronically understaffed and to improve retention:

1. Cash payment for fulfilling mandatory overtime each pay period.
2. Double-time pay for critically understaffed jail facilities.
(San Diego Central Jail, George Bailey, Vista jail, and Las Colinas)
3. 10% locked facility pay for all deputies working in jail facilities.
4. Booking facility premium pay.
5. Annual Retention cash payment to all deputies.

These proposals were rejected based on their cost, yet the cost of these proposals is just a fraction of what the department is currently paying to recruit and train new deputies and should be reconsidered. We are not asking for additional funds; we are asking for current funds to be reallocated to address retention initiatives.



The cost associated with replacing an open deputy position is extremely expensive and time-consuming. No other county job costs more than \$100,000 and a full year to produce a solo-trained deputy. A conservative cost estimate for replacing 591 deputies is upwards of \$70,000,000. Certainly, in this context, reallocating resources to incentivize voluntary overtime is prudent and fiscally responsible. We are asking the department to reallocate funds and make a substantial investment in the retention of deputies, instead of funding recruitment efforts, that do nothing to keep our current deputies from leaving the department on a grand scale.

We also hope to work with Sheriff Martinez, her SDSO leadership team, County Administration and friends like you on the Board of Supervisors to address retention and staffing over the long term, including a health care “carve out”, a cost neutral deferred retirement option and elimination of Tier D.

MOT was initiated six years ago. The time has come to end this policy in the best interest of the department, the deputies, the community, and taxpayers, to develop long term strategies to fix our retention and staffing challenges over time.

The Deputy Sheriffs Association stands ready to work with all interested parties to implement immediate solutions to end MOT and address the department’s growing staffing crisis.

Thank you again for your time and your support for the DSA.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Deane
President