



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Ed Maddox, 213-361-6980

**Email:** [emaddox@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:emaddox@bos.lacounty.gov)

**or**

**Contact:** Jamarah Harris, 213-379-4497

**Email:** [jharris@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:jharris@bos.lacounty.gov)

## **RIDLEY-THOMAS HONORS SUSAN BURTON, CNN HERO OF THE YEAR FINALIST**

*Has Helped Hundreds of Women Rebuild Lives after Incarceration*

**Los Angeles**—Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today honored Susan Burton for her years of work helping Los Angeles County women rebuild their lives after incarceration. Ms. Burton, who founded A New Way of Life Reentry Project after her own struggles with substance abuse and incarceration, was one of ten finalists for this year's CNN Heroes Award.

"Susan Burton's story of perseverance and leadership is truly heroic," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "Instead of losing hope after being caught in the 'revolving door' of Los Angeles County's prison system, she has empowered hundreds of formerly incarcerated women to build a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities."

A New Way of Life Reentry Project provides housing and reentry support for women and children, advocates for the human and civil rights of people in prison and ex-offenders, and builds leadership among formerly incarcerated women. In addition to being named a CNN Hero finalist, for which she will receive \$25,000

to continue her work, Ms. Burton has also received the Gleitsman Citizen Activist Award from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and numerous other honors.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas today also introduced a motion aimed at reducing the County's recidivism rate, specifically among youths transitioning out of the Department of Probation's juvenile detention camps. The motion directs County staff to review the recommendations of a report released last week by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund.

"Ms. Burton's tireless efforts to help women find their way back into society have proved beyond a doubt that the cycle of incarceration can be broken," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "Her leadership shows us—concretely and in the most human terms—what steps we as policymakers can and must take to fix our broken prison system."

More information on A New Way of Life Reentry Project can be found at: <http://www.anewwayoflife.org/>.

CNN's video profile of Ms. Burton and A New Way of Life can be viewed at: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cnn.heroes/archive10/susan.burton.html>.

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