



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement from Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas on the  
Department of Justice's Recent Report on the State of  
Los Angeles County Jails**

I am deeply concerned about the Department of Justice's recent report on the state of our Los Angeles County jails. The DOJ's conclusion that our jails fail to deliver constitutional mental health care and suicide prevention is a call to action.

The thoroughness of the report bolsters my belief that this County must have a robust diversion program. The place to deal with mental illness is not jail. I fully support alternatives to incarceration for the mentally ill without compromising public safety.

While the Sheriff's Department has made progress toward complying with constitutional practices, there is still a long way to go. Reducing suicides in our County jails requires better engagement from the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Mental Health. The deficiencies addressed in the report are simply unacceptable.

The Board of Supervisors has a responsibility to make sure that our jails are run humanely and that the mentally ill receive the services that they desperately need. I urge my colleagues to commit County financial resources to create a meaningful diversion program. I look forward to the Board of Supervisors' discussion on diversion, the jail master plan and jail population management at the July 15, 2014 Board meeting.

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