



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **[Supporting Families Impacted by Fatal Use Of Force](#)**

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion directing the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to develop a plan for better supporting families who lose loved ones after a fatal use of force by, or while in the custody of, the Sheriff's Department.

[The motion](#), authored by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Board Chair Sheila Kuehl, called for turning [recommendations](#) made by the Civilian Oversight Commission (CoC) into an implementation plan that would provide timely, trauma-informed and clear communication with grieving families, as well as the community. The County CEO is to report back to the Board in 60 days, including advising on any County infrastructure, staffing, training, and services that would be needed to carry out the implementation plan.

"Improving the way LA County interacts with, and supports, grieving families who have lost a loved one from a fatal use of force or in-custody death is another important aspect of public safety and criminal justice reform," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. "If done right, this type of communication can reduce trauma, support families, and improve community and law enforcement relations. This is no small thing – public safety doesn't come without public trust."

"When families lose a loved one who is being held in Sheriff's Department custody or through an incident involving lethal force, they deserve clear and timely communication. Family members must be treated with respect and compassion," said Board Chair Kuehl. "The Board's action today moves us closer

to an empathetic protocol to guide the Sheriff's Department as it deals with shocked and grieving family members."

Sheriff Jim McDonnell testified in support of the motion, saying, "We look forward to working with the Board and our County partners to provide the necessary input and support for the development of the implementation plan. It's an important conversation that addresses a critical moment that families will carry in their memories for the rest of their lives."

CoC Executive Director Brian Williams told the Board, "People in the community need to know that they matter and this is a great opportunity for the Sheriff, the Civilian Oversight Commission and the community to say, 'Everyone matters.'"

Among the CoC's recommendations are: creating a multi-disciplinary team to provide ongoing support, resources and transparent communication to grieving families; providing trauma-informed training for Sheriff's Department personnel who come into contact with grieving families; and advocating changes in state laws on access to victim resources.

"This is not just an issue for the Sheriff's Department – we believe that this is an LA County issue and that, through collaboration, we can show respect to these families and to their communities, and help them heal," CoC Chair Patti Giggans, who also serves as executive director of the nonprofit Peace Over Violence, noted. "We intentionally have outlined the functions of the response team based on the values necessary, like compassion, empathy, respect, transparency, trauma-informed communication and support."

"Treating families with respect is how we avoid making a terrible situation worse," added Inspector General Max Huntsman, who has been a champion of the County developing this type of program. "It is a basic duty of government, and something I fully support the CoC in recommending."

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