

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 3.50  
(ID # 21103)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

**FROM :** SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES AND SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL :

**SUBJECT:** SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES and SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL:  
Identifying Current Challenges Facing the Criminal Justice System and Finding Actionable Solutions

**Recommended Motion:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Executive Office to Work with the Superior Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Law Offices of the Public Defender, the Probation Department, the Sheriff's Department, and the Indigent Criminal Defense Contractors to Identify Current Challenges Facing the Criminal Justice System and Return to the Board of Supervisors in approximately 45 days with Preliminary Findings and Actionable Recommendations.
2. Add the sponsorship of Senate Bill 75 (Roth), which would allocate additional judgeships to various counties (including Riverside County), to the County's Priority Bill List and authorize the Board Chair to sign a letter in support.
3. Authorize the Board Chair to sign a letter requesting a local visit from Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero of the Supreme Court of California.

**ACTION:Policy**

  
Supervisor Kevin Jeffries, Chair 1/19/2023


  
Supervisor Karen Spiegel, Supervisor 2nd District 1/20/2023

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**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

On motion of Supervisor Jeffries, seconded by Supervisor Spiegel and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Gutierrez  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Date: January 24, 2023  
xc: District 1, District 2, E.O., DA, Public Defender, Sheriff,  
Sup. Court

Kimberly Rector  
Clerk of the Board  
By:   
Deputy

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**Background:**

The criminal justice system in Riverside County is experiencing a crisis the likes of which we have not witnessed in more than a decade.

Since October, and as of January 17, 2023, the Superior Court of Riverside County has dismissed 1,371 criminal court cases. Of that number, 97 felony cases have been dismissed, including charges of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, sex crimes, child abuse, and domestic violence, among others. While there are many possible reasons for this situation, the simple truth is that it reflects a systemic failure. Mass case dismissals deny victims of crime their right to be heard, fail to hold the guilty accountable or exonerate the innocent, and potentially put the public at greater risk.

These dismissals are simply the latest evidence of a criminal justice system that has exceeded its capacity. According to the census: the population of Riverside County has more than doubled since 1990; has increased 62% since 2000; and, more people moved to Riverside County than any other county in the State of California between 2010 and 2020. The growth of the criminal justice system has not kept pace. According to the Judicial Council of California's *2022 Court Statistics Report*, our Superior Court had 3,515 filings per judicial position, the 3rd highest ratio of new filings to judicial officers in the state and the most of any large court and behind only Inyo and Mono counties (two small counties with only two judges each). Riverside's ratio of judicial positions per 100,000 residents is 3.4, compared to the Statewide average of 11.4. According to the Judicial Council of California's November study entitled *The Need for New Judgeships in the Superior Courts*, Riverside County has 22 fewer judges than we need, second only to San Bernardino County.

To this already overburdened system, recent legislation has increased the workload of the criminal justice partners. While the benefits of criminal justice reform can be subject to interpretation (and not something that this item seeks to address), the increased impacts and costs to the county are not subject to debate. New legislation and recent appellate court decisions have added additional workload for the Superior Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Law Offices of the Public Defender, the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department, and our indigent defense contractors - all without reimbursement from the state. As a result, traditional models of determining workload are outdated and need to be reconsidered.

This Board has already taken extraordinary steps to protect the public's safety in Riverside County. Over the last few years, we have invested tens of millions in

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additional funding to support our public safety departments. Our investment continues to pay off. As often cited by local law enforcement professionals, our county remains one of the safest large counties in the state. The communication, coordination and collaboration between our county's justice partners are recognized as a model of best practices. As recently as our last meeting, we approved a legislative platform that advocates for new judgeships and for increased funding for public safety efforts, including additional and ongoing funding to reduce violence, develop crime prevention programs, and promote safer communities. Working with State Senator Richard Roth, a new bill was recently introduced creating and allocating new judicial positions where they are needed most. The proposed legislation, SB 75 (Roth), specifically describes the need in Riverside County. Additionally, we are working with the entire IE Caucus of our state delegation to bring Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero of the Supreme Court of California to Riverside County so that we can make our case locally. Our Board should support both efforts.

Despite our efforts to date, more can be done. Accordingly, this Board item tasks the Executive Office to work with the Superior Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Law Offices of the Public Defender, the Probation Department, the Sheriff's Department, and the indigent criminal defense contractors to identify current challenges facing the criminal justice system and return to the Board of Supervisors in approximately 45 days with preliminary findings and actionable recommendations.

**Impact on Residents and Businesses:**

Article XIII, section 35, of the California Constitution, declares that the protection of the public safety is the first responsibility of local government and local officials have an obligation to give priority to the provision of adequate public safety services. Engaging this review identifying the current challenges facing the criminal justice system and implementing real solutions will help ensure that our duty to our community continues to be met.