



February 27, 2024

Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee

Re: Motion #23-0187

Dear Public Safety Committee:

I am honored to be writing to you out of both personal and professional commitment to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Since 1997, I have worked with the LAPD, first as a training consultant and later as a researcher examining the interrelationship between marginalized communities, community violence intervention and law enforcement. Most recently, I completed an extensive program evaluation of the LAPD Community Safety Partnership (CSP) that looked closely at the impact of this innovative effort in both Boyle Heights and Watts. I have continued to conduct this research as CSP has extended its sites and efforts. I also serve as a Watts Gang Task Force Board member which brings me into ongoing contact with the LAPD. For all of these reasons as well deeply personal ones – I am married to a retired LAPD Deputy Chief and our daughter is a civil rights attorney who addresses law enforcement abuses – I am concerned about the LAPD disciplinary system. I have long believed that this was a system clearly in need of review and reform.

The current motion represents a serious and thoughtful effort to address what have been ongoing problems in the department's disciplinary system. Additionally, the growing concerns surrounding police accountability – all expressed in the uneasiness and interests of residents throughout Los Angeles – call out for reform. This is a desire that this motion clearly addresses. I have been on the ground, I have interviewed residents and conducted focus groups and the message I have heard repeatedly is clear. As one longtime resident of Watts told me, "We want police, we just don't want bad police. Can't they fix it so these things don't happen anymore?"

With all of that in mind, I strongly urge this committee to pass the motion support Motion #23-0187. It is critical to both public safety and community well-being, now and into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jorja Leap". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jorja Leap, Ph.D.

Professor

Executive Director, Social Justice Research Partnership

Co-Director, Watts Leadership Institute

jleap@ucla.edu

310.418.4150
