

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kristen Clarke
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland and Assistant Attorney General Clarke,

We are writing to express our strong concerns about recent complaints regarding the safety and well-being of juveniles detained in probation camps and facilities across Los Angeles County.

On November 9, 2006, DOJ notified the County of Los Angeles of its intent to investigate the Juvenile Probation Camps pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1997 (CRIPA), and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141 (Section 14141). DOJ informed the County that its investigation would focus on whether youth were adequately protected from harm. On October 31, 2008, DOJ submitted a “Findings Letter” to the County, confirming numerous conditions that violated youth’s constitutional and federal statutory rights and subjected them to harm, and outlined 41 areas requiring remedial attention. In response, DOJ and the County executed a “Memorandum of Agreement Between the United States and the County of Los Angeles Regarding the Los Angeles Probation Camps” (MOA), which allowed the County to address areas of concern over a 4-year period under supervision of a monitoring team. During that period of monitoring, Los Angeles County’s Probation Department remained profoundly out of compliance with orders to improve health and safety for youth offenders, and thus monitoring was extended approximately four additional years until February 24, 2015, at which time monitoring ended. However, during that monitoring period of over six years, and even after monitoring terminated, there are documented and proven instances of sexual abuse of juveniles detained at Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Camps and detention centers.

As you may know, there have been repeated reports of child abuse at various Los Angeles County Probation Department Camps. As noted in a recent *Los Angeles Times* article, the allegations of child sexual abuse date back to the 1970s and into 2018. In one case, a 12-year-old victim stated that she was forced to strip nude and shower as a group of male officers and employees watched with no supervisory purpose. Another 14-year-old victim stated an officer had molested her on multiple occasions and forced her to perform oral sex on him. Each of these victims were allegedly threatened with consequences for either refusing to comply with orders to submit to this sexual abuse or reporting their abuse to a supervisor. Many of these reports are not only deeply disturbing, but they also generate many questions regarding the DOJ monitoring and accountability protocols in place for these institutions.

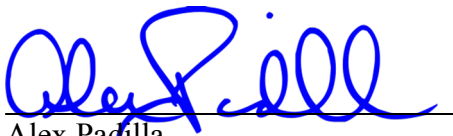
The MOA resulted from the County’s clear failure to protect youth from harm, including at the hands of Deputy Probation Officers responsible for their care and wellbeing. However, this abuse of institutionalized children clearly continued, and as a result, hundreds, if not thousands, of young girls were abused, and their lives forever altered. Given the reports of childhood sexual abuse spanning decades, we have grave concerns how the Camps were deemed in compliance by DOJ in 2015.

We urge you to immediately review this matter and provide the following information within 30 days:

1. The Camps were not in compliance from DOJ's own records. Further, the County refused to provide DOJ access to all child abuse investigations, as well as medical records and logs. Nevertheless, DOJ terminated monitoring in 2015. Please provide all the evidence for DOJ's determination that the Camps complied with the terms of the MOA.
2. Describe any actions DOJ has taken concerning Los Angeles County Probation Camps after they were found to be in full compliance with the MOA and provide all reports and/or complaints DOJ has received since monitoring ended in 2015.
3. What actions can, and will, DOJ take in light of the recent allegations of sexual misconduct at various Los Angeles County Probation Camps?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



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United States Senator