

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

3

From: Andy Caldwell <andy@colabsbc.org>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 8:33 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Lavagnino, Steve; Nelson, Bob; Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg; Williams, Das
Subject: County Supervisors! The problem is GANGS AND CRIME and socio-economics, not racism in the justice system!



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Public Comment
6/15/21
SB BOS Agenda Item D-3

County Supervisors,

This coming Tuesday, you are going to hear yet another report which purports to indicate that the number of people of color who are “justice involved” individuals is proof of systemic racism.

Truly, you are looking through the wrong end of the microscope!

As the Grand Jury report story below indicates....the increased criminality is ascribed to the LACK OF CONSEQUENCES due to DIMINISHED law enforcement, yet some of you are calling for further reductions in law enforcement?

Perhaps, there is a pathology in our communities that is attracting a disproportionate number of children of color into a gang lifestyle?

Family cohesion, good paying jobs for heads of households, youth activities, better schools, and more cops on the streets, rather than deconstructing our public safety departments is the way to go.

With respect to good paying jobs for heads of households, the shoe you have been trying to force on the foot of the north county DOES NOT FIT.

We need blue collar jobs! Such as oil and gas, manufacturing and industry. Jobs that people with a high school education or less, and people with limited English can excel at.

I know because I used to hire just such individuals for Union Sugar.

When are you going to admit that the extreme environmental agenda that destroyed such industries and opportunities in this county helped to feed the resultant societal/economic disfunction in our community?

Ask Sup. Lavagnino and Nelson: What happened (and what is happening) to Arrow Automotive, Union Sugar, Sunoco, SM Chile, Grefco, Battles Gas Plant, Diablo, Nipomo Refinery, etc, etc, etc.

The APCD, Environmental Health, and P and D, is what happened, among other state and fed agencies.

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury report finds youth gang recruitment increasing, resources decreasing

- Dave Minsky dminsky@santamariatimes.com

- Jul 14, 2020 Updated Aug 27, 2020

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1 of 2



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Jose Balmore Lainez, Jose Ricardo Saravia Lainez, Enedina Tomas and Mayra Ortega appear in Superior Court in Santa Maria for an arraignment hearing in March 2016.

- Frank Cowan, Contributor



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Agustin Flores, a suspected Guadalupe gang member, during a court appearance on Nov. 6, 2019.

- Dave Minsky, StaffDaveMinskyPublic Safety Reporter dminsky@santamariatimes.com

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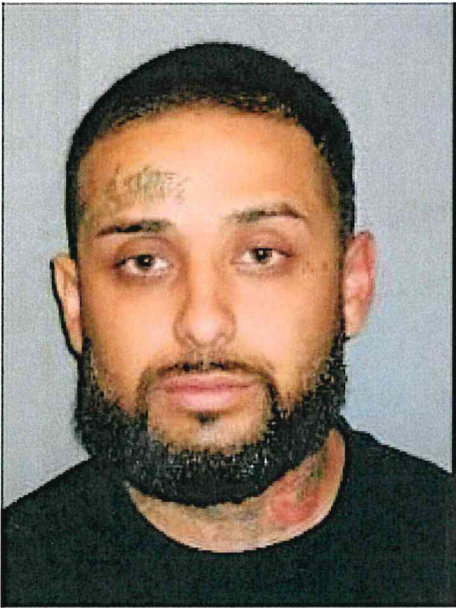
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Santa Barbara County middle and grade school students are increasingly recruited into gangs, while county juvenile programs and law enforcement resources meant to address the issue have steadily declined over the years, according to a grand jury report.

The report, which focused on juvenile gangs, found that recruits are getting younger with those under 15 years old being the fastest growing segment of the population.

Additionally, the report, released on June 29, noted that gangs themselves are becoming **more brazen in their activity because of lack of consequences due to diminished law enforcement resources**, including a Sheriff's Office gang unit that disbanded in 2017.

Jurors interviewed several local agencies, including the Sheriff's Office, Santa Maria and Lompoc police departments, school districts and nonprofits for the report, which came in response to increased activity throughout the county over the last several years.



Man wanted in connection to Lompoc Army soldier's death spotted after Saturday shooting incidents

A man wanted in connection to the 2019 shooting death of a Lompoc U.S. Army soldier was spotted on Saturday following an alleged attempted murder incident in which he shot at an occupied vehicle on West Olive Street.

The March 2016 Operation Matador sweep of more than a dozen suspected members of MS-13, a transnational criminal organization, in Santa Maria left a void that was soon filled by local gang members, according to the report.

Since then, gang activity has crept back up, with incidents of violence occurring almost on a monthly basis in Lompoc, which has approximately 600 gang members in the city, according to the report. The report adds that Sheriff's Office officials estimated “thousands” of gang members exist across 18 named groups in the county.

Juvenile gang membership is hard to calculate, although a 2017 state-administered Healthy Kids Survey found that county school percentages of boys and girls in seventh, ninth and 11th grades recruited into gangs were 4.6% and 3.5%, 5.2% and 2.4% and 6.7% and 2.9%, respectively.

Most members are Hispanic, with peer pressure, protection, the desire for respect and strained family situations cited as reasons for recruitment in the report.

Minors are often used in gangs' "dirty work" because laws don't penalize them as severely as adults, the report said, adding that those 11 or younger are not even prosecuted for crimes.

While the number of supervised juveniles in the county has gone down from 557 in 2013 to 335 in 2019, the figures don't tell the entire story, the report said.

Numbers show that youth involved in county gang crimes went from 199 in 2017 to 221 in 2019, while juvenile recidivism while on probation went from 0.11% in 2017 to 0.21% in 2019.

Additionally, identified gang youth who've committed misdemeanors or felonies during probation grew from 41 in 2017 to 66 in 2019, even though the number of juveniles existing on probation dropped from 357 in 2017 to 321 in 2019, according to the report.

"Police officers in one department told of a 12-year-old who committed a robbery but was not detained because of his age," according to the report. "Soon after, the released juvenile assaulted someone with a metal pipe."

Efforts to clamp down on gang activity have been further hampered by the Sheriff's discontinued use of the CalGangs database and the elimination of community-based programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and Understanding the Juvenile Justice System, according to the report.

Jurors made several recommendations, including that the county fund a Sheriff's gang unit in the next budget cycle and that the District Attorney's office establish a consortium of local police agencies to apply for anti-gang grants.

The full report can be found at sbcgj.org.