



Katherine Douglas *Public Comment, Public Safety*

From: Stephanie Kiesow <kiesowconsulting@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 11:46 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: My public comment for today

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Members of the Board and other decision makers,

I would like to give some thoughts on the financial condition of the county and the SBSO.

For background, I am Stephanie Kiesow. I am a former first responder in our county and the wife of a current first responder in our county. I left my first responder career to focus on my PhD in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Suicidology with an emphasis on supporting our first responders and their mental health. I also work for several mental health related organizations that serve our local first responders...I work very closely with the great people of the SBSO and SB County Fire Dept.

I am here to address a critical decision that could have devastating repercussions for our community. I am concerned about the possible elimination of Dr Cherylynn Lee's position as the embedded psychologist for the SBSO. I have worked with her in many professional capacities, including helping many county employees from both the police and fire industries during a mental health crisis. Also, I have worked with her in establishing and implementing mental health and wellness related trainings and the standardization of organizational support in our county. If her position is cut, make no mistake... you're not just cutting a job but, in part, abdicating responsibility to safeguard our first responders' mental health and, by extension, the safety of our entire community.

By removing this essential role, you are not just saving a few bucks...you are potentially inviting a wave of liability. If you didn't already know, first responders face immense pressures, stressors, and traumas and without adequate mental health support, they can and do experience many mental health challenges. This can lead to skyrocketing workers' compensation claims and also potential lawsuits against the county for failure to provide necessary support due to all the literature supporting everything I just mentioned.

Also, consider the consequences of high turnover rates. When our first responders lack psychological support, many often leave their agencies and lateral elsewhere, leading to costly recruitment and training for their replacements. This is not just an expense; it's a disruption that compromises public safety.

Lastly, first responders are our protectors. If you choose to disregard their mental health, you're not just failing them and their families; you're also failing the community they serve. Their well-being is directly tied to effective emergency response. And their well-being is directly and indirectly impacted by Dr Lee's position and unique subject matter expertise.

In closing, the decision to eliminate Dr Lee's position will have far-reaching consequences; many that have ripple effects. This is about more than just budgeting and saving money; it's about your duty to protect our first responders and the community they serve. I urge you to work together to find a way to save Dr Lee's

position within our county, stand up to show support for our first responders' mental health and wellness, and if not...be prepared to answer for the fallout.

Thank you for your time.

Stephanie Kiesow

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Katherine Douglas

From: Sarah Ebe <sarahebe103@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 1:46 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment re: 4/15 Budget Meeting - Public Safety | Sheriff's

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I gave public comment at today's Board of Supervisors meeting, but due to the reduced time allotted to public comment, I was unable to provide all of my remarks.

I am hoping that the second half of my comments can still be entered into the public record:

Hello Supervisors,

My name is Sarah Ebe Nuñez. My husband Anthony is a detective in the Special Investigations Bureau with SBSO. We are also longtime members of the Santa Barbara community. Both my husband and I attended UCSB, and we lived in Santa Barbara for 20 years, until we moved to Ventura a few years ago, in large part because as we wanted to grow our family and buy a house, we could no longer afford to stay in Santa Barbara. But we still consider Santa Barbara our home and are deeply committed to this community.

I'm here today as both the wife of a Sheriff's deputy and an invested community member to strongly urge you to reevaluate the proposed budget and pay increases (or lack thereof) for Sheriff's deputies.

As I'm sure you are aware, the current and proposed compensation plan makes it incredibly difficult for deputies and their families to be part of the community and invest long-term in the agency. My job centers around fighting for the protection the environment and health of our local community members, and my husband's job centers around protecting the safety and well-being of our community. Both our careers are dedicated to protecting and bettering the Santa Barbara community. I would imagine that we are the types of people that you want living and working in our community.

We love this town and this community. But the proposed compensation and reduced benefits for deputies forces incredibly difficult conversations and decisions for deputies and their families.

The fact that our family had to move from Santa Barbara breaks my heart. The fact that we would even entertain conversations about leaving the agency due to compensation breaks my heart. My husband loves the SBSO agency. He has dedicated his entire career to this community. I cannot imagine leaving. But your proposed budget and compensation for deputies puts deputies and their families in a very difficult position.

SBSO deputies are already paid significantly less than neighboring agencies, like SBPD, UC and Ventura City and County. Your budget is creating a situation in which public servants - fire, sheriff's, public health, teachers

- the most dedicated community members, are unable to live here and may be unable to even work here in the future.

I'm not sure how many of the Supervisors have law enforcement in your families, but in case you are not aware, the sacrifice that deputies and their families make are immense.

These men and women, quite literally lay their lives on the line every single day. Every single day, I work a full-time job, take care of our toddler, as of late, grow a human life in my belly. And when my husband is 30min or an hour late coming home from work and I haven't heard from him, the first thought that enters my mind is "what has happened to him?" As hard as I try not to, I worry. And that worry is just part of my life. It is part of every deputy's spouse's life. We worry about their safety, whether or not they will come home, and how we will explain it to our kids if something should happen.

And that doesn't even take into account the time deputies take away from their families simply to do their jobs. The success of Deltopia has been mentioned a few times today, and I think it's worth mentioning that my husband was part of that effort, and as a result, had to work on our son's 3rd birthday. These are the kinds of sacrifices deputies and our families make.

So with all due respect, given the level of sacrifice these men and women and their families make for our community every single day, the proposed compensation, overtime and benefits plan for Sheriff's deputies is simply put, offensive.

In closing, I am here today as a community member, deeply concerned about the impact Sheriff's deputy compensation will have on the quality of SBSO staff and the safety of our community.

But I am mostly here today as a wife and a mother. I strongly urge you to reevaluate the proposed compensation and benefits for Sheriff's deputies. I urge you to look past deputies and their livelihoods as numbers. But rather, I urge you to think about the people. We are people.

As you consider revising the budget and improving compensation and benefits for Sheriff's deputies, I urge you to think about the deputies, their wives and husbands, their children, and the lives you are impacting when you make these decisions.

Thank you.

Thank you in advance for ensuring the Supervisors understand the full picture of the situation.

All the best,

Sarah Ebe Nuñez