

The Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office

Proposed Reductions in Service:
Consequences



Core Mission:

To protect the public safety of the community and to ensure that the citizens of Santa Barbara County are protected from the harm caused by crime.

District Attorney's Role

- Provide law enforcement agencies with legal advice and research on investigations.
- Review cases submitted by law enforcement agencies and file criminal complaints
- Provide services to victims and witnesses
- Act as liaison for law enforcement to judges for search and arrest warrants

Felony Prosecutions

- Murder
- Gang violence and witness intimidation
- Sexual and physical abuse of children
- Sexual assaults against women
- DUI causing death or injury
- Arson, robbery, residential burglary
- Physical and financial abuse of the elderly

Felony Prosecutions

- Domestic Violence
- Stalking and serious criminal threats
- DUI with multiple prior convictions
- Drug trafficking offenses
- Major white collar crimes
- Violations of probation

Misdemeanor Prosecutions

Crimes which carry lesser penalties up to one year in county jail

- Assault and Battery
- Sexually annoying conduct towards children
- Resisting arrest
- DUI
- Thefts from businesses or persons
- Domestic Violence

Misdemeanor Prosecutions

- Trespassing
- Aggressive panhandling
- Public intoxication
- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Disturbing the peace
- Many other *common* offenses

Current Situation

THE RESOURCES OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS
OFFICE ARE STRETCHED TO
THE LIMIT – *NOW*

Current Situation

Murder as an example:

Currently 14 murder cases involving 26 defendants pending in the North County

Currently 9 murder cases involving 17 defendants, (2 death penalty) pending in the South County

Factors Influencing the District Attorney's Budget

- Prior year reductions
- Target issues

DA cutbacks already implemented:

2008-09: 8 Positions cut (7% reduction)

2 Deputy District Attorneys

1 DA Investigator – Criminal Operations

5 Truancy Supervisors & Social Workers

2009-10: 3.5 base cuts due to funding loss

1 DA Investigator – Welfare Fraud

1 Truancy Supervisor

1.5 Legal Office Professionals

Other factors influencing target budget:

- \$400.0: 08-09 Final Budget Allocation to restore 3 Deputy DAs reduced in target
- \$1,480.0: 09-10 estimated 20% revenue loss
 - \$500.0 Public Safety Sales Tax
 - \$372.5 Federal & State Revenues
(grants, COPS, Welfare Fraud)
 - \$219.0 JJCPA funding
 - \$131.0 Civil Penalties

Proposed Budget Reductions

Goal: To preserve our ability to protect the community by responding to the most serious and violent felony offenses.

1. End our participation in Drug Treatment Courts (3 fte)

- This reduction will eliminate the two DDAs assigned to drug treatment courts.
- Focus will necessarily be shifted to felony trial courts.

2. Eliminate one of the two Deputy DA positions in our Environmental/Consumer Protection Unit (1 FTE)

The remaining single Deputy DA would handle only the most major consumer and environmental cases county-wide.

**3. Elimination of 50% of prosecutors
and support staff assigned to
misdemeanor criminal operations
(11 fte)**

- The remaining 4 prosecutors county-wide would attempt to cover misdemeanor domestic violence, DUI and sex offenses.
- With rare exception, the true *door-step* crimes: Petty theft, public drunkenness, loitering, aggressive panhandling, simple battery misdemeanor vandalism and disturbing the peace offenses, for example, simply would not be prosecuted.
- Broken Windows Theory



4. Elimination of Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Vertical Prosecution Unit (5 fte)

- The two remaining vertical Domestic Violence DDAs county-wide would only be prosecuting felonies.**
- Misdemeanor Domestic Violence cases would have no investigator and be divided by the remaining misdemeanor DDAs.**

Tier Two Reductions

5. Elimination of Arraignment Court prosecutors and support staff. (4 fte)

Criminal arraignment courts would no longer be staffed though 60% of cases are resolved there.

- Since judges are not permitted to negotiate pleas directly cases may clog the courts and increase the strain on an already overcrowded jail.
- Resolution of cases will be delayed weeks and months, negatively impacting victims, witnesses, defendants, and public confidence in the criminal justice system.

6. Close the Lompoc Office (5 fte)

- Lompoc operations would be closed and consolidated into the Santa Maria office. This will impact the Lompoc community, crime victims, witnesses and law enforcement.
- This may negatively effect officer availability and department overtime pay.

Conclusion

- This department has been subject to cuts already, is as efficient as it can be under the circumstances and will be unable to properly carry out its mandate if further reductions are imposed.
- The safety and welfare of the people of the County of Santa Barbara will be directly and immediately jeopardized by further reductions.

