

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**George Gascón Takes Oath of Office and Institutes Sweeping Reforms To Transform The Largest Criminal Justice Jurisdiction In America**

*Gascón Ends the Use of Money Bail, Enhancements, 3 Strikes, Juvenile Transfers, and the Death Penalty*

*Announces Unprecedented Efforts to Resentence 20,000 People in Prison and Review Police Use Of Force Cases Dating Back to 2012*

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**LOS ANGELES** - Today, George Gascón took the oath of office and announced immediate, decisive reforms to transform America's largest criminal justice jurisdiction. Taken together the sweeping reforms are expected to permanently change the course of California's criminal justice system and end the era of mass incarceration in Los Angeles.

"It is time to change course and implement a system of justice that will enhance our safety and humanity," said Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón.

"Today we are confronting the lie that stripping entire communities of their liberties somehow made us safer—and we're doing it with science, research, and data. For decades those who profit off incarceration have used their enormous political influence—cloaked in the false veil of safety—to scare the public and our elected officials into backing racist policies that created more victims, destroyed budgets, and shattered our moral compass. That lie and the harm it caused ends now."

At 12:00 PM today George Gascón became the District Attorney of Los Angeles County. An email went out to the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office (LADA) at 12:01 detailing directives that go into effect December 8. Full copies of the directives are available here. A synopsis of *some* of the major changes are below:

**Bail**

LADA will no longer request cash bail for any misdemeanor, non-serious or non-violent felony offense. Until January 1, 2021, attorneys may request bail in the small subset of cases articulated as detention eligible in Article 1, Section 12 of the California Constitution. On or before January 1, 2021 directives and mechanisms will be put in place to eliminate money bail in its entirety.

Defense attorneys with an in-custody defendant that qualify for release under LADA's new pretrial detention policy may immediately calendar a hearing to revisit and withdraw bail for their clients. LADA will not oppose.

Experts estimate that hundreds of individuals behind bars today will be eligible to be freed tomorrow under this new pretrial release policy.

**Conviction Integrity Unit**

LADA's Conviction Integrity Unit will drastically expand its eligibility criteria such that all non-frivolous claims of innocence and wrongful conviction will be reviewed.

**Death Penalty**

In any case charged from this day forward, LADA will not seek the death penalty. In any case currently charged with special circumstances where the Office has not previously announced it would seek death, the case shall now proceed as a non-death

penalty case. The Special Circumstance Committee is permanently disbanded. In all cases where the Office previously announced it would seek death or the individual was previously sentenced to death, the Office will undertake a case-by-case review to determine how to proceed.

### **Felony Charging Policy**

LADA will no longer file enhancements, 5-year or 3-year priors, and will not sentence persons alleging 3 strikes.

### **Habeas Petitions**

In all petitions for a writ of habeas corpus, LADA's Habeas Litigation unit (HABLIT) shall undertake a good-faith post-conviction review designed to ensure the integrity of the challenged conviction. Where a post-conviction claim appears potentially meritorious on its face, HABLIT shall immediately commence investigating the claim, and seek the earliest possible resolution where it is determined that the claim is meritorious.

In every case, where any injustice is uncovered, including racial injustice, whether or not it is of a constitutional magnitude, HABLIT shall examine and recommend appropriate remedies capable of redressing the harm uncovered, within the bounds of the law.

### **Youth Justice**

LADA will immediately end the practice of transferring kids to adult court and all policies regarding juveniles were updated in recognition of the science behind adolescent brain development.

### **Misdemeanor**

LADA will stop charging a number of low-level offenses associated with poverty, addiction, mental illness and homelessness and will work instead to divert individuals into behavioral health services.

### **Resentencing**

LADA's prospective sentencing policies must apply with equal force to sentences in cases where the judgment is final. Accordingly, LADA commits to a comprehensive review of cases where the defendant received a sentence that was inconsistent with the felony charging and sentencing policies denoted above.

According to prison evaluations, 50 percent of all those sentenced in LA County are rated "low-risk" to reoffend. Experts estimate conservatively that, applied retroactively, at least 20,000 people currently incarcerated in prison are eligible for consideration for resentencing under this new policy.

LADA will prioritize for consideration people convicted of nonviolent crimes, those deemed low risk for release, people with demonstrated records of rehabilitation, older prisoners, prisoners who are especially at risk for COVID-19, and people sentenced to adult prison terms as children.

The resentencing process will be a significant undertaking and will include input from victims and victim advocates. The Amity Foundation, in partnership with the Returning Home Well initiative, has promised to assist everyone resentenced.

### **Victims**

LADA's Victims Services division will contact all victims of violent crime within 24 hours of receiving notification. This includes sexual assault, homicide, attempted homicide, domestic and intimate partner violence. Support will be provided to both victims/survivors as well as children indirectly affected by violence and crime.

LADA's Victims Services division will also contact the families of individuals killed by police and provide support services.

Additionally, Deputy DAs, in conjunction with the victims services division, will immediately end the practice of requiring cooperation in exchange for victims services.

Deputy DAs were also directed to immediately stop seeking body attachments for victims.

\*\*\*MORE\*\*\*

During DA Gascón's remarks and [in a letter](#) he sent to the Los Angeles law enforcement community earlier today, he further announced that he was convening a Use of Force Review Board made up of policing experts, civil rights attorneys, and community members. They Board will review fatal use of force cases dating back to at least 2012 and will make recommendations to LADA as to which additional cases need be reopened. The University of California at Irvine's Civil Rights and Criminal Justice Clinics have graciously agreed to support this unprecedented effort. The announcements made today are due in large part to the significant efforts of Mr. Gascón's [transition team](#). With their help and expertise DA Gascón will be rolling out additional initiatives to enhance safety, justice and enhance community health in the days, months and years ahead.

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George Gascón is the District Attorney for Los Angeles County. His historic campaign was endorsed by the Democratic Party, the LA Times and the LA Daily News, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, U.S. Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, Governor Gavin Newsom, Mayor Eric Garcetti, Black Lives Matter cofounder Patrisse Cullors, labor leader and civil rights icon Dolores Huerta, and former Chief of the LAPD Charlie Beck. [Click here](#) for a full list of his supporters.

Mr. Gascón grew up in Los Angeles after his family immigrated from Cuba. An army veteran, Gascón served as a Los Angeles Police Department Officer for 30 years, rising to the rank of Assistant Chief of Operations. In 2006 he became Chief of Police in Mesa, Arizona, where he stood up to the hateful and anti-immigrant policies of then Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. In 2009, then-San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom appointed Gascón Chief of Police. Newsom turned to Gascón again in 2011 when he tapped him to be District Attorney to fill the seat vacated by an outgoing Kamala Harris who had been elected Attorney General. During his tenure Gascón implemented reforms that are being duplicated across the country while overseeing violent crime and homicides drop to rates not seen in 50 years. After being elected to two terms, Gascón returned to Los Angeles to care for his elderly mother and to be closer to his two daughters and grandchildren in Long Beach. Gascón is married to Fabiola Kramsky, a three-time Emmy Award winning journalist and recipient of the "Premio Nacional de Periodismo," the highest recognition given to journalists in Mexico.

For more information about George Gascón go to [www.GeorgeGascon.org](http://www.GeorgeGascon.org) [<http://www.GeorgeGascon.org>] .

George Gascón for Los Angeles County District Attorney  
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