



Second Attack in Five Days Injures Two Santa Barbara County Custody Deputies, Staffing Level Challenges Worsening

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SANTA BARBARA, CA -- SANTA BARBARA – On Friday, July 29th, 2016 at approximately 7:55am a Custody Deputy suffered a concussion when attacked by an inmate in the Santa Barbara County Main Jail. A responding Custody Deputy was also injured subduing the inmate.

The incident occurred while the inmate was being removed from a holding cell to have his finger prints taken. During the removal of the inmate from his cell, the inmate struck a deputy in the face. The deputy was struck multiple times during the assault. A responding deputy also suffered an injury to his head in an attempt to subdue the inmate. The inmate was subsequently Tased and tackled to the ground. It took multiple Custody Deputies to restrain him, place him in handcuffs and transport him to a safety cell.

As a result of injuries from the attack, the two Custody Deputies were taken to the Sansum medical clinic. One deputy suffered a concussion and was taken off work to recover, while the other deputy was cleared and returned to work.

According to Sheriff's Department officials, a criminal complaint for battery on a peace officer, resisting arrest and assault with force likely to create great bodily injury has been sent to the District Attorney's Office for review. Many similar reports have been sent to the DA in the last five years.

In April 2011, the California passed the public safety legislation (AB 109) that effectively shifted responsibility for certain populations of offenders from the state to the counties. The implementation of AB109 provisions have transformed county jails into small prisons. The prison population that has been transferred back to county jails has brought some of the violence associated with state prison inmates. A system already overcrowded and burdened with the needs of inmates with mental health issues, prison realignment has taken its toll on working conditions throughout Custody Operations in Santa Barbara County. There was a significant increase in assaults on deputies in 2012, the year after AB 109 took effect, and the rate of attacks on jail staff has doubled since then. Friday's assault was the 60th so far this year, which surpassed the number of assaults for all of 2015.

The Deputy Sheriffs' Association has been advocating for an increase to minimum staffing for several years, not only to increase safety, but also to alleviate an excessive workload. The necessity has been supported by two separate staffing studies, one from Crout & Sida commissioned by the Sheriff, and the other by Carter Goble Associates LLC commissioned by the Board of Supervisors. Both studies were critical of the unnecessary dangers faced by jail staff and inmates alike.

The DSA recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors focus on increasing minimum staffing numbers in existing Custody Operations as deputies are hired for the new jail project.

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