



## **Staffing Shortages Reach Critical Levels; Santa Barbara Sheriff Imposes Mandatory Overtime for Patrol Deputies**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SANTA BARBARA, CA** -- For the first time in recent memory, the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office has imposed mandatory overtime shifts for patrol deputies to meet the minimum staffing levels for deployment across the County. The imposition of mandatory overtime for patrol deputies follows extensive discussions between Sheriff's officials and SBCDSA leadership. The labor-management exchanges resulted in an overtime scheduling system that transitions patrol shifts to a 4-12 schedule to maximize coverage.

SBCDSA President Matthew McFarlin said that the new schedule is the best method to address the chronic staffing shortages that have troubled the Sheriff's Department for more than a year. "With patrol deputies now joining our jail deputies and dispatcher personnel in mandatory overtime schedules, it's abundantly clear that our department has a severe staffing shortage," McFarlin said. "Mandatory overtime is a burden for many of our personnel and their families. Many of us will be adjusting our activities, especially child care schedules," McFarlin said.

The Deputy Sheriff's Association stated support for the 4-12 schedule, but only as a temporary measure while Sheriff's and County officials address the underlying issue of chronic staffing shortages. Sheriff's officials tout the number of applications and recruits entering the Academy. However, even with those new hires, the Sheriff's Office is barely keeping up with attrition among deputy ranks. Weekly statistics released by SB Sheriff's HR officials reveal minimal progress in the last six months on reducing the number of vacant patrol and custody deputy positions. In January of this year, Sheriff's HR statistics showed 13 vacant patrol deputy positions and 12 vacant custody deputy positions. The report for the week closing July 22 showed 15 and 8 vacant

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The Deputy Sheriff's Association has warned County and Sheriff's officials repeatedly that the problems recruiting and retaining well-qualified personnel will only increase in the coming years. "The number of proficient young people who want to be police officers has taken a dive in recent years," said McFarlin. "Very few well-qualified people look at the current political environment facing peace officers and decide to pursue a career in law enforcement."

Hiring qualified sworn personnel will remain extremely difficult for SBSO officials, especially when virtually every large law enforcement agency is actively recruiting the best and brightest candidates.

SBCDSA members remain dedicated to the safety of Santa Barbara residents and businesses. Mandatory overtime creates an additional burden for sworn personnel, but it is a burden patrol deputies and custody deputies say they can endure, even for an extended period of time, as long as the Sheriff and the Board of Supervisors are taking steps to resolve the underlying recruit and retention problems that caused the staffing shortages.

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