

January 24, 2024

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors  
301 W Jefferson, 10th Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dear Chairman Gates and Members of the Board:

The undersigned urges you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will hold all MCSO personnel to the highest ethical standards to protect public safety and ensure accountability for deputies and supervisory staff who have violated the civil rights of Arizonans. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will rebuild community trust, improve the supervisory culture within MCSO, and uproot racial discrimination against community members. We also urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will be committed to working with the parties in the ongoing *Ortega Melendres* litigation in the spirit of good faith and collaboration to achieve the aforementioned goals. Finally, we urge you to implement a fully transparent and inclusive process that meaningfully incorporates the feedback of Latinx, Black, and Indigenous Arizonans and members of other racial and ethnic groups who have historically been negatively impacted by the policies and practices of MCSO.

Our full list of recommendations is below:

**1. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will rebuild community trust.**

It is critical that the Interim Sheriff meaningfully engages with and listens to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community members, individuals from mixed-immigration status families, non-native English speaking community members, those who are poor, houseless, and newly arrived immigrants in Maricopa County. All too often, these individuals have been either ignored or targeted and brutalized by law enforcement, leading to an erosion of trust. We urge you to select an Interim Sheriff who recognizes this insidious problem and is committed to serve and protect everyone in Maricopa County, including marginalized and vulnerable members of the community with the express goal of rebuilding and earning their trust.

**2. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will improve supervisory culture within MCSO.**

A robust supervisory culture that holds supervisors and deputies accountable for misconduct is critical to ensure and maintain a high standard of professionalism when interacting with all members of the public. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who will prioritize and incorporate these principles within MCSO. Accountability not only means appropriate disciplinary action taken against MCSO personnel who are found to commit wrongdoing, but it also means giving supervisors the tools and support they need to effectively and efficiently intervene and train



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deputies who display concerning behaviors when on patrol and interface with the public. The Interim Sheriff must also be someone who commits to a zero-tolerance policy towards discriminatory policing and is committed to holding supervisors responsible for identifying and responding to deputy misconduct.

**3. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who is committed to uprooting racial discrimination against BIPOC community members.**

To this day, MCSO continues to disproportionately stop Black and Latinx motorists in Maricopa County. The disparities continue to persist more than ten years after the issuance of the federal court order in *Ortega Melendres* that found the agency and the Sheriff unlawfully used race to target Latinx for investigation and detention, and for illegal stops and seizures. We urge you to select an Interim Sheriff who will commit to eliminating the “disparate outcomes” in traffic stops against BIPOC community members in Maricopa County and will prioritize solving this ongoing problem.<sup>1</sup> Appointing an Interim Sheriff who is not committed to fully eliminating disparate outcomes in traffic stops should be unacceptable to this Board, and we urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who is committed to eliminating the disparate outcomes, bias, and discrimination in traffic stops which directly harm BIPOC community members.

**4. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who is committed to working with the parties in *Ortega Melendres* in the spirit of good faith and collaboration to achieve these necessary goals.**

It is clear that some at MCSO view the federal court orders in *Ortega Melendres* as obstacles to and at the expense of public safety. We urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who rejects this viewpoint and who instead will protect and serve *all* of those in Maricopa County. We further urge you to appoint an Interim Sheriff who understands that public safety is also a priority for the BIPOC community, the poor, houseless, and other vulnerable individuals throughout the county. The Interim Sheriff must understand and recognize that public safety is diminished when law enforcement engages in racial discrimination and violates the Constitution. As such, the Interim Sheriff must have a genuine desire to comply with the Injunctions issued by the federal court as a minimum requirement to rebuild community trust and eliminate racial and ethnic bias and discrimination at MCSO.

**5. We urge you to implement a fully transparent and inclusive process that meaningfully incorporates the feedback of Latinx, Black, and Indigenous Arizonans and members of other racial and ethnic groups who have historically been negatively impacted by the policies and practices of MCSO.**

We hope and are confident that you will ensure that Latinx, Black, and Indigenous Arizonans and members of other racial and ethnic groups who have historically been negatively impacted by the policies and practices of MCSO have a meaningful voice

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<sup>1</sup> MCSO Traffic Stop Annual Report (January 2022-December 2022)  
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in this process. Years after MCSO was found to have engaged in racial profiling and unlawful traffic stops of Latinx in Maricopa County, the data still shows “evidence of disparate outcomes by driver race or ethnicity in traffic stops on many stop outcomes.”<sup>2</sup> The insight from those directly impacted by these racially and ethnically discriminatory policies and practices of MCSO is essential to choosing an Interim Sheriff as those closest to the problem are the closest to the solution. Incorporating their input is crucial to appointing an Interim Sheriff who will act in the best interest of all Maricopa County residents.

This Board has immense responsibility in holding the MCSO accountable to all residents of Maricopa County. We hope and expect this Board to seriously consider these recommendations particularly given the pattern of unconstitutional conduct by the MCSO and its impacts on many of our friends, families, and community members.



We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine K. Wee".

Christine K. Wee  
ACLU of Arizona

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<sup>2</sup> MCSO Traffic Stop Annual Report (January 2022-December 2022)  
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