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July 15, 2026

To: Richard Zeiger, Foreperson
Yolo County Civil Grand Jury
120 W. Main St, Suite A
Woodland, California 95695

To: Catherine Rayhill
Superior Court of California, County of Yolo
1000 Main Street
Woodland, California 95695

Re: Yolo County Detention Facilities, Correctional Officer Staffing Issues Continue!

Dear Judge Rayhill and Foreperson Zeiger:

The following is the response of the Yolo County Sheriff's Office to the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury report titled, "Yolo County Detention Facilities, Correctional Officer Staffing Issues Continue!" This response addresses the findings and recommendations directed to the Sheriff's Office—specifically, Findings F1-6 and Recommendation R1.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

F1. Correctional officer hiring and staffing is still a serious challenge for MDF.

Response: The Sheriff's Office partially agrees with this finding.

The Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with Human Resources, has made significant progress to improve the hiring process. The results have been strong. Qualified and hireable applicants currently exceed the number of vacant Correctional Officer positions. However, staffing will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future due to the elimination of fifteen Correctional Officer positions that were lost in the countywide workforce reduction approved by the Board of Supervisors during the 2026-27 budget process.

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F2. The MDF should have 120 officers; at the time of inspection, they had 98. At a follow-up meeting in May 2025, they had 94 correctional officers due to a handful of recent retirements. They currently have 95 (soon to be 97) correctional officers.

Response: The Sheriff's Office agrees with this finding.

However, since the date of the above-mentioned inspection, the Sheriff's Office has made great strides in the hiring of Correctional Officers. As of today's date, there is only one Correctional Officer vacancy and that position is expected to be filled quickly as the Sheriff's Office currently has a list of qualified and hireable applicants. Unfortunately, due to the elimination of fifteen Correctional Officer positions that were lost in the countywide workforce reduction approved by the Board of Supervisors during the 2026-27 budget process, the number of Correctional Officer positions available to be filled has decreased to 105.

F3. Due to the staffing shortage, there is still quite a lot of forced overtime.

Response: The Sheriff's Office agrees with this finding.

As noted in this report, based on the staffing analysis conducted in 2021 the recommended FTEs for the Correctional Officer classification is 147. Unfortunately, this year the allocated FTEs were reduced to 105. Therefore, overtime will continue due to the structural understaffing of Correctional Officers. It should be noted that overtime is filled voluntarily before resorting to "forced overtime."

F4. Understaffing at the MDF is creating the need to release inmates because the jail has reached capacity. Per MDF leadership, and the previous Grand Jury report, in 2024, a total of 18 individuals were released under the consent decree. In 2025 this number dropped to 6. The individuals released were in different stages of their court proceedings or serving time when released. The individuals released were determined to be the most suitable for release based on the consent decree criteria. (Re: Yolo County Jail NA (E.D. Cal.) | Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse)

Response: The Sheriff's Office agrees with this finding.

During the first half of 2026, the average daily population (ADP) at the Monroe Detention Facility averaged approximately 259 inmates, reducing the need to release individuals under the federal consent decree. However, the ADP is outside the Sheriff Office's control and could increase in the future.

While Monroe has sufficient rated bed capacity for the current ADP, not all beds are available due to inmate classification requirements necessary to ensure the safety and security of the incarcerated population and staff. In addition, reductions in allocated Correctional Officer positions have prevented the Sheriff's Office from opening the Leinberger Detention Facility, limiting available housing capacity.

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When population levels, classification requirements, staffing limitations, and the federal consent decree converge, the Sheriff's Office may be required to release individuals to remain in compliance with the consent decree.

F5. Applying for the correctional officer position is a long process. The county has improved on the time it takes for the application process but still loses candidates to other surrounding counties with higher pay.

Response: The Sheriff's Office partially agrees with this finding.

The Sheriff's Office has worked closely with County Human Resources to significantly reduce the correctional officer hiring timeline. Through the review and improvement of multiple hiring processes, the Sheriff's Office believes it now has one of the shortest hiring timeframes among neighboring agencies.

While it is common to lose candidates throughout the hiring process, the Sheriff's Office is not aware of evidence demonstrating that candidates are leaving specifically for surrounding counties offering higher salaries. Candidates voluntarily withdraw for a variety of reasons, and those reasons are not consistently tracked.

As a result of the improvements made to the hiring process, the Sheriff's Office currently has few vacant Correctional Officer positions and maintains a pool of qualified candidates to fill future vacancies as they occur.

F6. The pay scale for the Yolo County correctional officer continues to be lower compared to other adjacent counties.

Response: The Sheriff's Office partially agrees with this finding.

Many neighboring counties, including larger agencies such as Sacramento County, offer higher salaries than Yolo County but employ sworn personnel in their detention facilities. However, the County recently updated its compensation philosophy from targeting 95% of the average of comparable agencies to 100% of the market average. A salary survey was conducted using a range of comparable counties of varying sizes to establish competitive compensation.

While the Sheriff's Office supports the County's updated compensation philosophy, it also recognizes that offering salaries above the market average would further strengthen the County's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified Correctional Officers in an increasingly competitive labor market.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. While the Yolo County application process for correctional officers has been updated and streamlined, the 2025-26 Grand Jury suggests finding even more, innovative ways, to speed up the process.

Response: The Sheriff's Office agrees with this recommendation.

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While the hiring process has been greatly improved, the Sheriff's Office understands all processes should be continually evaluated for efficiency.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Lopez,
Yolo County Sheriff/Coroner/Public Administrator

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