



THE ANTELOPE VALLEY COALITION LAUNCHES NEW PEOPLE POWERED #CANCELTHECONTRACTAV CAMPAIGN TODAY

Campaign Brings Awareness to the Anniversary of the Measure R Win and Calls for Antelope Valley to Cancel Their Contract with the LASD

Click [here](#) to download #CanceltheContractAV campaign assets

Click [here](#) to watch the coalition's campaign PSA

Click [here](#) to watch campaign influencer videos

Visit <http://cancelthecontract.com/> for more information

Los Angeles, CA - March 4, 2021 - Today, on the anniversary of the historic Measure R victory, the new people powered **#CanceltheContractAV** campaign, powered by **Reform LA Jails**, launches in response to the lack of accountability of Sheriff Villanueva, and calls for the cities and schools of Palmdale and Lancaster to cancel their contracts with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, and reinvest dollars into a new vision of community safety and meaningful services for students and the community.

Led by the steering committee of **Waunette Cullors** (WOW Flower Project), **Janie Hodge** (Paving the Way Foundation), **Beth Cayetano** (Alliance for Black Student Equity), **Ruth Sanchez** (ACLU AV Chapter, Dolores Huerta Foundation), **Cortez Chandler** (Timelist Group, Inc.), and **Ansar Muhammad** (The H.E.L.P.E.R. Foundation), with the support of Reform LA Jails' key influencer-ambassadors **Dolores Huerta** (Founder and President of Dolores Huerta Foundation and Co-Founder of United Farm Workers), **Dawn-Lyen Gardner** (*Queen Sugar*), **Megalyn Echikunwoke** (*Night School, Almost Family*), **Behzad Dabu** (*How to Get Away With Murder, The Chicago Inclusion Project*), **Matt McGorry** (*How to Get Away With Murder, Orange is the New Black*), rising Compton rapper **Westside Boogie** and more, the campaign looks to cancel school and city-wide contracts with the LASD in Palmdale and Lancaster.

The **#CanceltheContractAV** campaign also calls for accountability for the Sheriff murder of Michael Thomas and sheds light on how far out of compliance LASD and LA County are with the federal DOJ Settlement Agreement. After more than five years of federal oversight, use of force is up over 50% in both Palmdale and Lancaster, and together the two AV Sheriff stations conducted 39,232 discretionary stops in 2019, targeting vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, an average of over 100 unwarranted stops a day, 365 days a year. And despite 5 years of anti-bias training, the AV Sheriff deputies continue to

discriminate against Black and Brown residents. For example, while comprising roughly 17% of the combined AV population, Black people make up 32% of all stops, and yet are less likely to have contraband or to be on probation or parole. And this unconstitutional and often deadly policing doesn't come cheap, with each city spending nearly \$30 million on contracting with the LA Sheriff's Department. The **#CanceltheContractAV** campaign aims to create a new vision of public safety with the millions of dollars of taxpayer money no longer going to a violent police force. The coalition believes their money can be reinvested into community-based care for children, mental health services, affordable housing, and much more.

The Antelope Valley has a long history of racism and law enforcement violence as early as 1890, which has only exacerbated into the present day. From 1990 to 2010, population changes developed, and these historically white towns turned into large majority-minority cities. Community leaders in Antelope Valley have for decades been organizing to raise awareness around the harassment and violence endured at the hands of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Coalition leaders of the **#CanceltheContractAV** will continue to build onto their work from the past few years of community organizing around non-compliance with the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement, and recent powerful organizing by local young leaders in response to the racial justice uprising of this summer and a legacy of Sheriff Deputy violence.

*"This campaign isn't just about stopping violence; it's about re-envisioning care for our communities, said **Waunette Cullors of the WOW Flower Project, who serves on the steering committee**. It's about reinvesting in our children and our schools, mental health services, housing, green spaces, and so much more. Canceling the contract is just the first step in helping our community reimagine what our flourishing looks like."*

*"As a teacher, I'm constantly thinking about what's best for my students. Our demands are about building a safe community for their lives and their learning. They're about creating a future that's free of law enforcement violence and full of opportunities for their joy, passions, and progress, said **Beth Cayetano, a local educator and member of Alliance for Black Student Equity, who serves on the steering committee**."*

*"I supported Measure R from the beginning because there can be no real change without oversight," said **Dawn-Lyen Gardner**. "The people should not have to work this hard to get a Sheriff to comply with the law. Antelope Valley needs to cancel the contract."*

*"It was clear from his refusal to answer his legal subpoena, that the Sheriff does not believe in oversight," said **Matt McGorry**. "Especially on the heels of the People's Uprising this summer, we cannot let elected officials skirt accountability. Antelope Valley, please cancel this contract."*

*"Together we can help the people of Antelope Valley cancel their contract with the Sheriff and move towards measures that reinvest their dollars into schools without police officers and full of trained counselors as well as community-based trained teams including medics, crisis counselors, and social workers," said **Westside Boogie**."*

Specific list of campaign demands:

1. Cancel the Antelope Valley Union High School District contract with the LA County Sheriff Department.

2. Call for the California DOJ to open a civil rights investigation in to the historical and ongoing state violence and white supremacist activities in the Antelope Valley.
3. Arrest the Sheriff deputies that murdered Michael Thomas in Lancaster in June 2020.
4. Demand the LA County Board of Supervisors comply with the [Settlement Agreement](#) and stop using County Counsel to thwart compliance.
5. Cancel the Palmdale and Lancaster contracts with the LA County Sheriff Department.

Visit cancelthecontract.com to learn more about the campaign and join the coalition in our fight. Click [here](#) for a visual Measure R timeline on the work the people have been doing over the past year.

About Reform LA Jails:

Reform L.A. Jails represents a coalition of citizens, community leaders, businesses, and organizations fighting to permanently reduce the population of people cycling in and out of jail. That starts with recognizing how mental health, drug dependency, or chronic homelessness issues are exacerbated by incarceration. As COVID-19 bears down on our County Jails, endangering the lives of thousands of Angelenos, it's more important than ever that we demand care, not cages.