

I strongly support the proposal to establish a Citizens' Advisory Committee to monitor activities of the County Sheriff's Department. We are in a historical moment that calls for heightened citizen involvement in policing with an eye to equal justice for everyone in our County, de-escalation when possible, alternatives to incarceration where appropriate, reducing the scope of policing by offering mental health care, social advocacy, economic sustenance, housing, medical care and other responses where appropriate and not burdening our police services with this huge scope of responsibility. It is also important to reduce trauma and vulnerability of police officers in every possible way. It is time for us to look at every aspect of policing in our County, to make changes for the safety and equity of everyone. A Citizens' Advisory Committee is one step in this direction, because it brings civilians and police together, enlarges perspectives on both sides, allows for examination of unsafe or unfair situations and fosters capacity for change where it is needed. I urge you to establish a Citizens' Advisory Committee to advise the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office.

Fran Schwartz