

We, the citizens of Mendocino County, are concerned about an ongoing pattern of nepotism, bias, and racism within The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. We are advocating that the Mendocino Board Of Supervisors deny the MCSO's request for a \$4 million budget increase.

Looking back at the last ten years, there emerges a clear pattern of misconduct coupled with an inability on the part of the Sheriff to take responsibility or even recognize his own biased and inappropriate behavior.

The most recent incidents include:

The drug overdose of a deputy in March 2020 resulting in his being placed on paid administrative leave and pointing to issues of addiction and erratic behavior within the department.

The employment and potential contract renewal of Liz Barney as MCSO Public Information Officer and the discovery of her racist and anti-mask mandate posts on the far-right social media platform Parler. It also does not reflect well that her husband, Shannon Barney, who continues to remain employed by the department, was one of the central figures in the Covelo Sexual misconduct and coercion lawsuit. The fact that they were not married at the time does little to dissipate what appears to be some serious nepotism within the department.

The 68 and counting positive Covid cases at The Mendocino County Jail and the reports from concerned citizens with incarcerated loved ones who are reporting a lack of sanitary conditions and a denial for testing. This is in conjunction with the MCSO's continued refusal to back the public health officer and the governor of California throughout the entirety of the pandemic has put the entire community at greater risk during and caused endless stress during an already trying time for our community.

The request for an increase in MCSO funds for \$4 million submitted with a photograph of a hog-tied black man with the caption "Imminent Threat - Appropriate Response" and the subsequent tone-deaf, non-apology issued by sheriff Matt Kendall.

This does not even touch on the earlier behaviors within the department that include:

- The embezzlement of public funds. <https://krcrtv.com/north-coast-news/eureka-local-news/former-mendocino-sheriffs-office-employee-convicted-of-embezzlement>
- The bullying by the department and disqualification of student basketball players wearing "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts, which goes directly against the Supreme Court ruling and exemplifies the dangers inherent in the group of "Constitutional Sheriffs" of which Tom Allman and Matt Kendall are both members. <http://theantimedia.org/teen-girls-basketball-i-cant-breathe/?fbclid=IwAR1ti74NjJ0wjpJ5Veyc8jjHnirqxdxQiF3CQW0C9IDODYczSxYBeEXW5sl>
- Racial Profiling of community members, mis-naming offenses, and failure to address concerns resulting in extreme damage to reputation. <https://kymkemp.com/2019/08/29/letter-writer-alleges-unethical-and-damaging-behavior-by-the-mendocino-county-sheriff-dept-and-local-media-complicity/>

- The wrongful tasing death lawsuit/settlement for \$5 million for the death Steven Neuroth a schizophrenic man in psychiatric crisis.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/mendocino-county-jail-death-results-in-5-million-settlement/>

- Covelo sexual misconduct and coercion involving Shannon Barney which took place under the supervision of acting sheriff Tom Allman, who handpicked his successor Mr. Kendall, who continues to employ Mr. Barney now husband of Liz Barney mentioned above and which resulted in two suicides of Covelo deputies in less than a year and a settlement paid out in taxpayer dollars.

1. https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/mendocino-deputy-who-reported-wife-swapping-settles-lawsuit/amp/?fbclid=IwAR2CFTI_ypiVNc4XFLQ8ljxBNnSloSGQb1Vh2xQhR1TdDrt-mFLuf2M9Ymw
2. https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/second-mendocino-officer-to-kill-self-in-less-than-year/?fbclid=IwAR38rQ_laoM-V_Icy72mjIifXdiT-nUZXYAk9WPmRKaEtq0pmdSupquTpaM
3. <https://www.willitsnews.com/2008/04/02/deputy-sues-over-covelo-service/?fbclid=IwAR1l1zxicrHWSkltOuahE5Od5WMpq8G4s2lk13cHTFOy8M0bEWoNA9339jQ>

At this time in the history of The United States Of America, when racial tensions are at an all time high, and there is a well needed focus on bias and the continued targeting of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) by Law Enforcement, it is imperative that the MCSO exhibit sensitivity, integrity, and awareness. Unfortunately, the department has done the opposite and continues to undermine public trust and worse, to be completely unaware of why there is a public outcry. Ignorance is not an excuse for poor behavior and it certainly wouldn't prevent a citizen accused of breaking the law from facing criminal charges, and neither should the MCSO be excused from facing the consequences of their poor choices, nepotism, criminal behavior, and racism.

When the "Defund The Police" movement came to the forefront of the American political consciousness on the heels of the brutal killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Daniel Prude, Rayshard Brooks, and so many other Black Americans, the thought behind it was that funds that normally go toward the hiring of more law enforcement officers would instead be reallocated toward community outreach programs that have been statistically shown to actually reduce crime and strengthen communities. Funds would instead be funneled toward helping the de-homed, addiction and substance abuse counseling and treatment, domestic violence resources, youth outreach and suicide prevention, community aid, financial aid, child protective services, different-abled assistance programs, food assistance, social services, healthcare, and the clean-up and restoration of the environment.

Rather than increasing funding for additional officers, we recommend intensive anti-bias training, de-escalation training, funding for The Public Safety Advisory Board and more oversight of Law Enforcement conduct.

Thank You,

Citizens Of Mendocino County

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