

Half-Cent: Big Difference

The following is LAPD Chief William Bratton's monthly message distributed in early October via the department's online listserv.



Greetings from the men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department. The following is the monthly update for October 2004. We hope you find the information useful. You are encouraged to continue to visit our website at www.lapdonline.org as it has grown to over 10,000 pages since its inception in 1998.

We are also interested in hearing from you to find out how we can improve the Los Angeles Police Department website. A brief survey has been posted on our website, and the information received from those participating will be considered as we revise LAPDOnline. By taking a few minutes to fill out the survey, your input will help us improve and refine our online services. Your cooperation is deeply appreciated.

Chief's Message

The retooling and refocusing of the Los Angeles Police Department since my appointment in October 2002 has shown that the men and women of this Department can and have made a significant impact on the quality of life in this City. Through focus, innovation, perseverance, but mostly through plain hard work, they have been responsible for eliminating LA's dubious title as "murder capital of the nation" and have moved us toward the Mayor's ultimate goal of being the safest big city in the nation.

In less than two years they have helped transform this Department into a lean, efficient and focused crime-fighting team. The LAPD is prepared to reclaim its stature as the world's premiere law enforcement organization. The only obstacle that stands in our way is the need for additional resources, namely more cops on the streets and more technology.

In the past several months, I have made mention of Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca's efforts to find a permanent source of public safety funding for all law enforcement agencies in the County. The LA County Board of Supervisors agreed to put a half-cent sales tax initiative on the Nov. 2 ballot. I want to use this article to educate you on the impact the initiative, now called Measure A, would have on this Department. I am not asking for a yes or no vote, nor am I asking you to campaign for or against this initiative. I am, however, providing you with information to educate you on an initiative that could have a tremendous impact on every employee in this Department, every resident in this City, and every resident in Los Angeles County.

The passage of Measure A would mean the City of Los Angeles would receive approximately \$168 million a year, out of the total estimated \$500 million generated annually for all law enforcement agencies in the County. These funds would be dedicated specifically for law enforcement, violence prevention programs and the hiring of more staff for the LA County District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office and the Probation Department.

Built into the initiative are provisions that allow for any annual surpluses to be redirected back into police and sheriff budgets the following year. This new revenue could not be used to replace existing funding, and additional protections written into Measure A include independent financial and performance audits, ensuring that these funds would only be used for law enforcement.

In terms of dollars translating into resources for this Department, Measure A would allow for a net gain of 1,260 police officers and 128 civilian support personnel for the City of Los Angeles, over a gearing-up period of roughly five years. Added to our current sworn strength of roughly 9,200 that would mean a total of 10,460 officers. The additional 1,260 police officers would be assigned to the field at the geographic Areas throughout the City.

The gearing-up period is the time it will take to identify, screen, hire, and train new recruits, and Recruitment and Training Divisions' ability to respond to a rather large influx of new personnel. These two divisions would not only be dealing with the activities surrounding the new hires brought about by this initiative, but also with the routine activities of replacing the roughly 350 to 400 retirees the Department sees each year.

During the gearing-up period, the Department could use any remaining funds not used for hiring personnel to fund overtime assignments specific to patrol and crime suppression in the geographic Areas, at the discretion of Area Captains. The remaining funds could also be used to purchase technology and equipment, such as vehicles, computers and radios, to support the new hires. Outside the \$168 million allocated to the City of Los Angeles, 15 percent of the total estimated \$500 million raised by the County is earmarked for outreach intervention programs, addressing such issues as child abuse, domestic violence, graffiti, and youth violence.

It will require a two-thirds majority vote for Measure A to pass. While a survey conducted in early August of 1,000 randomly selected County voters shows there is support for the measure, there are those who oppose it. Measure A is an increase in the sales tax, which means the average resident in the County of Los Angeles will pay an additional forty to

\$65 more in sales tax each year. Those polled in the initial survey were asked: "Should the Countywide sales tax be increased by one-half cent?"

Initial responses, were 57 percent "yes" and 32 percent "no." After hearing the arguments for Measure A, 68 percent responded "yes" and 26 percent responded "no." Of the 32 percent initially opposed to the measure, the increase in taxes was the key reason for their opposition.

The formula is simple, more law enforcement officers equals less crime. That formula worked in both New York and Boston. With more officers, the tipping point was reached. In both cities, there were sustained dramatic drops in both violent and quality of life crimes. Now it is up to the voters of Los Angeles County.

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For more information on how to donate, please visit our website at www.havenhouse.org or call us at 323-594-8888.

If you or someone you know needs help, call us through our 24-Hour Hotline - 1-323-481-2676.

Haven House is the oldest shelter of its kind in the United States, founded in 1984 to shelter families of violent partners.

Our services include: counseling services for women and children in residence and counseling for community clients who are not residents of the shelter.

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