

February 9, 2022 -- DRAFT

Chief of Police Michel Moore
Los Angeles Police Department
100 W. First St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Sir:

We in Sunland-Tujunga appreciate the difficulty of effectuating law enforcement in a patchwork city inside a political structure. But we strongly object to your recent actions.

Community Policing and Relationship-Based Policing are the heart of successful modern police work. Thanks to relationships and community knowledge built by SLOs Cesar Contreras and Gloria Caloca, along with your patrol officers' dedication, Sunland-Tujunga has enjoyed remarkably low crime statistics vis-à-vis most of Los Angeles.

The abrupt removal of SLO Cesar Contreras without involving our highly pro-law-enforcement community or our C-PAB is a shock. We are now asking whether our community is a priority in LAPD's Community Policing?

"Community policing is based upon a partnership between the police and the community whereby the police and the community share responsibility for identifying, reducing, eliminating and preventing problems that impact community safety and order."¹

Removing trusted SLO Contreras is antithetical to LAPD and community's shared goals. We have been stripped of the opportunity to communicate to LAPD and Councilperson Monica Rodriguez to state our objections regarding Contreras' removal. Therefore, the move occurred without full and accurate community understanding. Especially since it's been stated that Contreras was removed at the request of Councilperson Monica Rodriguez, not for wrongdoing, but per some *personal* preference.

That is not the role of a Los Angeles Council Member.² It is overreach and abuse of power. Worse, how is a Council Member with none of the firsthand knowledge that Foothill Station management and SLOs possess allowed to make safety decisions about officer distribution? LAPD must make its decisions without pressures from above.

Pragmatically, this move is corrosive because SLOs build up local contacts and an experiential base that keeps them apprised which troublemakers are violent vs. loud, local rap sheets, habits, vehicles, haunts, hiding places, warrants, stay-aways, and RO's. They know which local ally to ask about which need, and which patrol officers are more suitable for which tasks. Shall we throw all that out to placate the power play of a Council Member who prides herself on being at odds your pro-LEO S-T community?

It gets worse. Now we understand that Contreras' forced relocation will cause a domino effect of destructively uprooting several Foothill SLOs from their communities—destroying all those SLOs'

knowledge bases—and thrusting them into neighborhoods where they have little knowledge, few contacts, and will take years to build up trust.

LAPD should be free of external political influence. Granting Rodríguez' request corrodes all Los Angeles' trust in LAPD. S-T's degree of positive interaction with LAPD is rare throughout Los Angeles, and should be respected.

Studies have been done addressing the crucial role of community voices in policing:
"This report will remain centered on its primary mission, listening to and *elevating community voices* including community leaders."³

We ask for the same consideration.

Sincerely,
The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

¹ <https://www.lapdonline.org/community-policing-unit/>

² <https://www.lacity.org/government/popular-information/elected-official-offices/city-council>

³ Civil+Human Rights And Equity Department, December 2019 and April 2021