

August 25, 2025

Meeting Date: August 26, 2025

Agenda Item No. 2

Batch No. 03

Chair Terra Lawson-Remer and Members of the Board of Supervisors
County of San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Item 26 – Opposition

Dear Chair Terra Lawson-Remer and Members of the Board:

The San Diego Supervising Probation Officers' Association opposes the proposal to eliminate OC spray. **OC spray is a less harmful alternative to physical force and to remove this tool will cause more harm than good:**

- **Less-Harmful Alternative:** OC spray provides a safer option than physical force or takedowns, reducing the risk of serious injury for both staff and youth.
- **Effective in Stopping Violence:** It can quickly end fights and aggressive behavior, including spontaneous peer or gang-related altercations, and helps prevent escalation into larger disturbances or riots.
- **Used Responsibly:** OC spray is employed only in response to violent behavior, never as punishment. Trauma-informed interventions and de-escalation remain the first approach whenever possible.
- **Equalizer in Size Disparities:** In situations where smaller or less physically strong officers face larger, stronger, or more aggressive youth, OC spray provides a safe and effective means of control.
- **Short-Term Effects:** While highly uncomfortable, the effects of OC spray are temporary and subside with proper decontamination.
- **Maintains Safe Distance:** Its use allows staff to intervene without direct physical confrontation, lowering the chance of injury during volatile situations.
- **Trained and Experienced Staff:** All staff are trained in proper deployment, have been exposed to OC themselves, and understand both primary and secondary effects.
- **Policy and Oversight:** Usage is governed by strict policies, training requirements, and reporting procedures, ensuring accountability and preventing misuse.
- **Reduces Workers' Compensation & Overtime:** Fewer staff injuries mean less time off work, fewer workers' comp claims, and less need for costly overtime coverage.
- **Minimizes Legal Liability:** Safer interventions reduce lawsuits and claims tied to excessive use of force or injury.

We respectfully urge the Board to engage in meaningful consultation with our Chief and Officer Associations prior to considering the removal of this critical safety tool. As both public servants and community members, we believe it is essential that our voices be included in this discussion. The individuals most directly impacted are our staff, who bear the physical risks when managing dangerous situations. We encourage the Board to gather comprehensive information and fully evaluate the operational and safety implications before making a final decision.

Respectfully,

Joe White- President
Mia Nicole Hernandez- Treasurer
Jennifer McIntyre- Secretary
Jennifer Simone- Board Member
Omar Pazarin-Board Member