

TAXPAYER ALERT

On Friday, June 12, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors adopted a \$770 million budget that makes draconian cuts in essential programs and services including: Sheriff, Fire, Probation and the District Attorney while over funding public defender, information technology and planning and development.

Here is what the DA had to say about the cuts her department sustained:

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Important Message from the District Attorney:

Regarding the proposed cuts to her FY 09/10 Budget:

*“With rare exception, the true door-step crimes: **Petty theft, public drunkenness, loitering, aggressive panhandling, simple battery, misdemeanor vandalism, under the influence of a controlled substance and disturbing the peace offenses**, for example, simply would not be prosecuted, which will diminish the level of public protection against criminal offenses of concern to the community.”*

*The next slide shows how many of these crimes occur in an average year and how many **WILL NOT** be prosecuted.*

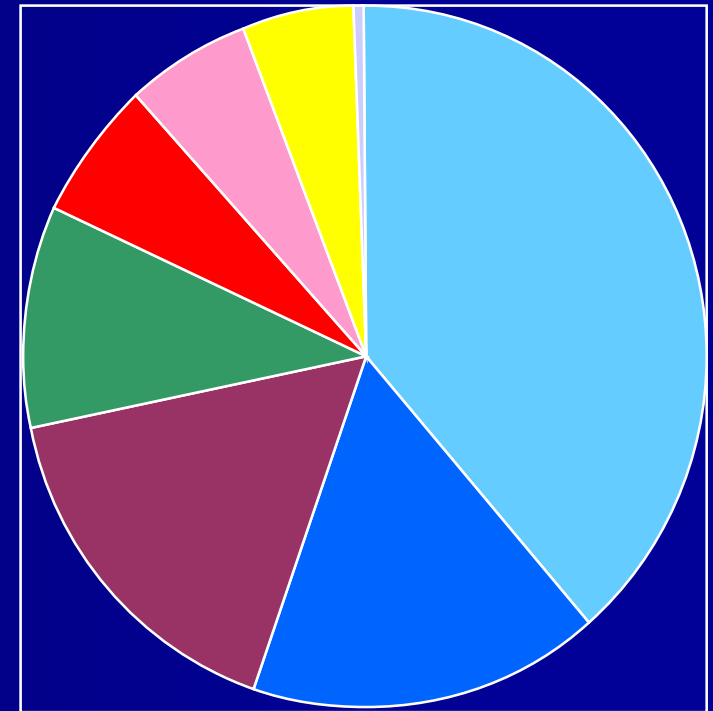
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14,622 misdemeanor filings 2008

n	Public intoxication	2,866
n	Disturbing the Peace	1,230
n	Under the Influence	1,225
n	Petty Theft/Burglary	756
n	Trespass	473
n	Assault/Battery	436
n	Vandalism	396
n	<u>Panhandling</u>	<u>32</u>

TOTAL= 7,414

(the above listed misdemeanors will not be prosecuted due to the budget cuts adopted by the Board of Supervisors)



SBCTA ADVOCATES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY:

The Following Letter was sent to the County Board of Supervisors on Friday, June 12, 2009, in advance of them adopting the proposed budget urging them to oppose substantial cuts in our law enforcement and public safety departments.

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Thursday, June 11, 2009

Mr. Joe Centeno, Chairman
Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara

Re: 2009/10 County operating budget

Dear Chairman Centeno and members of the board:

The Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association voted unanimously at our Board meeting today to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that you reject the fiscal year 2009/10 County operating budget. This budget would undermine Santa Barbara County's essential law enforcement safety net. This would be especially so with respect to the Sheriff's Department.

Moreover, the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association opposes cuts in the District Attorney's office that would discontinue prosecution of a variety of offenses, including petty theft, public drunkenness, aggressive panhandling, simple battery, and disturbing the peace.

To be clear, if prosecution of these offenses were to end, their incidence would skyrocket and the safety of local communities, particularly the socioeconomically poorest communities, would substantially diminish. These would be cuts the County simply could not afford to make.

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The Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association understands that budget cuts are unavoidable and necessary, and has long called for fiscal restraint. Our Board continues to encourage you to make the safety and quality of life of the public your top priority. It is the view of the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association that non-public-safety departments should shoulder the predominance of budgetary reductions.

In addition, we urge the Board of Supervisors to consider new revenue options, including oil and gas. We would encourage you, in particular, to support reconsideration of the Tranquillon Ridge Project at the state level. We believe that, as a result of the state budget crisis, the state may be receptive to reconsideration at this time.

We also encourage you to consider cutting development fees as a way to stimulate new applications and revenue. The City of Carpinteria has implemented this approach, and has experienced increased revenue.

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Furthermore, we believe that the County of Santa Barbara should contract for more services. If budgetary projections on the basis of pension obligations in the next several years come to pass, literally tens of millions of dollars more of County services would have to be cut, if there were not more contracting of services.

Finally, we encourage you to reform the County pension system now. The current system will bankrupt the County if it is not reformed in the immediate future. We intend to be in further communication with you on the subject of the County pension system in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration of our position and your service to the public. You are always welcome to attend our luncheon meetings held on the second Thursday every other month at the Marriott in Buellton. Please contact our Executive Director, Joe Armendariz, if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Lanny Ebenstein, Ph.D.
President

cc: County Administrator Michael Brown
County Sheriff William Brown
District Attorney Christie Stanley