

NEWS RELEASE

June 27, 2013



ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY

700 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE WEST • SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92701 • 714/834-3320
www.ocgrandjury.org • FAX 714/834-5555

Jury Out on Penal Reform

Santa Ana, California---AB 109 is the State's attempt to lower prison population by paroling its non-violent, non-sexual, non-serious offenders. It also requires the County to place its newly convicted, non-violent, non-sexual, non-serious criminals on probation rather than sending them to state prisons. Every day a crime is committed in the County, the effectiveness of AB 109 comes into question. Was that crime the results of a criminal released to parole or probation under the mandates of AB 109? If an AB 109 parolee violates his or her terms of parole he or she will be jailed locally rather than sent back to prison. Likewise, those on probation will be incarcerated in the County jail rather than state prison. As a result, the Orange County jails are at near capacity.

The AB 109 program is still too new to provide statically reliable answers as to its effectiveness. Critics fear huge costs, both financial and humane. Supporters tout it to be the greatest innovation in penal reform of the century. The jury is still out.

Another subject reviewed by the Grand Jury is the jail run Commissary. It sells inmates convenience items – candy, noodles, soup, safety razors, aspirin, flip flops, to name a few. Deliveries are made three times a week. About \$500,000 of sales proceeds are typically contributed to inmate welfare programs.

Though well intended, the Grand Jury challenged the effectiveness of these welfare programs in its report, ***Jail Rehabilitation Programs, Are They Effective???***, released 5/31/13. The critical conclusion in that report is that there are no metrics to measure the effectiveness of the money spent.

The jail's financial efficiency, its physical capacity and its ability to rehabilitate its inmates is of vital concern to the County. The jails account for the largest part of the County's payroll. These concerns well justify the legislative mandate for an annual review by the Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury report, including Findings/Conclusions and Recommendations, can be found on the Orange County Grand Jury's website, www.ocgrandjury.org. This report will also be included as part of the Final Report of the 2012-2013 Grand Jury, to be published later this year.

2012-2013 Orange County Grand Jury

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ray Garcia".

Raymond Garcia
Foreman