

CITIZENS COMMISSION ON JAIL VIOLENCE (CCJV)
Statement by Reverend Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, Commissioner

Friday, September 28, 2012 10:00 am

Our analysis of jail violence would remind those in law enforcement who are people of conscience and consciousness that we appreciate them, and are not aiming at them, but at those who are rogue cops, that segment found in every career field. Abraham Lincoln says, "If you want to test a man's character, give him power." Then Lord Acton, British historian, says, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

So give good people power, and give good training to these good people, and we end up with good results. Good training, of course, includes accountability to the maximum, and corruption to the minimum. The keynote in essence must include surveillance, for without proper monitoring, who will protect us from our protectors? In that regard, let me share four brief notes.

1. We must commend our Board of Supervisors, for they seem determined to expunge the negatives that have been revealed by such as the Office of Independent Review, ACLU, the Sheriff's Ombudsman and others using exhaustive and authentic investigations. Our commission, having scanned hundreds and hundreds of explorations can verify to all that we do indeed have a problem.

2. The Sheriff is now attentive and would do well to meet with a review team to be established by the Board of Supervisors, both standing before the Supervisors monthly for the first year of monitoring and of reviewing progress in meeting the positive recommendations adopted by the Board. The Sheriff claims that increased funding will be required for compliance, and

this is a consideration that should be examined along with the outlining of new procedures.

3. Tracking is crucial. Equally crucial is tracking independent of monitoring by the Sheriff's Department, but accountable only to the Board of Supervisors.

4. The monthly meeting of all parties would do well to be an open meeting, reviewing designated items and adherence to time lines, with the press being present to monitor and report to the public the status of progress.

Summarily, we are in harmony and know that we have a problem. Further, we know we have valid and workable solutions.

So ours can no longer be an excuse of not knowing or a failure of know how.

We can only be faced with a failure of will.

WE WILL TO SUCCEED IN CORRECTING JAIL VIOLENCE IN OUR SYSTEM.