

RACHEL ROSSI ON THE ISSUES

YOUTH JUSTICE

Branding a kid with a strike is an incredible and irreversible punishment that runs counter to what our juvenile focus should be - rehabilitation. Revise DA policy to create presumption of not filing strikes against kids, and require supervisory approval before charging strikes. Reform camps to be more rehabilitative and not a training ground to later push kids toward adult criminal activity.

IMMIGRATION

Work with law enforcement to prohibit ICE enforcement in county courthouses and at probation offices. Protect immigrants who serve as witnesses and report crimes. Revise DA policy to consider immigration consequences when making plea offers.

DRUG POLICY

Support marijuana conviction expungement and also revise DA policy to stop overcharging drug possession to circumvent proposition 47. Proposition 47 reduced some drug possession charges to misdemeanors, and the DAs office has tried to get around the law by over-charging simple possession as possession with intent to sell - just to still charge a felony. This practice goes against the will of the voters and must stop.

DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty is clearly racially disparately applied, is costly, is ineffective and is broken. Never seek the death penalty.

TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The prosecutor represents the People, and she must listen to and partner with stakeholders, advocates, experts, and the community in the development of policies. Track and publish data on who is being charged. With transparency comes accountability, and that is how we get to reform.

RACIAL DISPARITIES

Work to fix racial disparities through outside office audits and increased oversight of prosecutorial data and policy.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Advocate to improve the law, but stop hiding behind the law. Today, the DA doesn't need a change in the law to appoint an independent prosecutor in cases of alleged law enforcement use of force resulting in death. This will cure the bias problem - DAs work with police and there is a conflict of interest when they are called on to prosecute police.

THREE STRIKES

The DA has incredible power to control the outcome of each case just based on the way they charge it. For example, a DA can choose to not file a prior strike if it's decades old and the offense conduct did not cause harm to any victim. The DA must be wiser and more targeted in charging decisions, and cannot simply charge the greatest possible offense against everyone. Revise DA policy for the filing of strikes and enhancements, requiring stricter layers of approval and a list of factors to consider when determining whether to file a strike or enhancement.

BAIL

End cash bail, but don't stop there! We must also ensure we expand who is released pretrial if we really believe in innocence until proven guilty. Detention pretrial can cause loss of jobs, homes, and the pressure for innocent people to plead guilty. Craft a pretrial release policy that seeks to only incarcerate pretrial those who pose a threat to the community. Fight risk assessments that result in racial disparities.

VICTIMS

Victims have the right to be heard, and they are too often not afforded that right. The DA should notify victims who seek notice and expand opportunities for restorative justice outcomes if the victim wants it - to rebuild and restore victims after suffering harm.

HOMELESSNESS

Stop fighting the homeless start fighting homelessness. End the ineffective and costly revolving door of our homeless neighbors through jails, and advocate for smarter and focused use of resources on community services that prevent homelessness. Investigate fraudulent practices that raise rent costs and unfairly throw people on the streets.

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the incarcerated population and they have long been ignored in the criminal justice reform conversation. Develop gender-responsive charging and sentencing recommendation policies.

MENTAL HEALTH

First, expand access to existing diversionary programs, including by revising DA policies on who prosecutors recommend for diversion instead of jail. This decision, at minimum, should require the DA to consider the input of a mental health provider. Second, explore ways to keep those suffering from mental health issues out of the criminal legal system in the first place, by not filing charges.

PROBATION AND PAROLE

Over 6 million people in our country are under correctional control - the vast majority of people trapped in the criminal legal system. And it's incredibly difficult to escape. The number one charge for men booked into our LA County jails is a supervision violation. The DA should advocate to reform supervision to be less punitive and more rehabilitative and restorative.

