

NEWS

FROM THE OFFICE OF

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Lovingood pushes for welfare fraud prosecutions

Under an initiative by San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Robert A. Lovingood, the Board on Tuesday took action to develop procedures that would increase welfare fraud referrals and criminal prosecutions.

“From 2009 to 2015, we have seen a 70 percent decline in the number of welfare fraud cases referred to the D.A.’s office,” Lovingood said. “District Attorney Mike Ramos and I agree that we need to make it clear that San Bernardino County will prosecute and deter welfare fraud. It’s good for our communities, and taxpayers deserve nothing less.”

As the number of cases referred for criminal prosecution has declined, the number of administrative hearing convictions for welfare fraud has increased from 99 in 2012-13 to 268 in 2014-15. Criminal prosecutions by the District Attorney’s office carry greater penalties and greater deterrence as well as possible restitution.

Presently, welfare fraud investigations are conducted by a unit within the County’s Human Services. This unit, at its discretion, either refers cases to the District Attorney for prosecution or handles them through administrative hearings. In recent years, there has been a decline in the number of cases referred to the District Attorney and an increase in cases handled through administrative hearings.

The Board of Supervisors supports a collaborative effort among Human Services, the District Attorney, and the County Administrative Office to develop and improve protocols and procedures that will increase the referral and prosecution rate of welfare fraud cases within the County. These protocols will ensure that best practices are put in place with a broad County goal of reducing welfare fraud.

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