## **NEWS**

## From the County of San Bernardino Josie Gonzales Fifth District

http://www.sbcounty.gov/gonzales



**OCTOBER 18, 2011** 

JGFDS-PR-269 SUPERVISOR, C.O.P.E. CO-HOST DISCUSSION ON COUNTY RE-ENTRY PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LISHA SMITH AT (909) 387-4565

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SUPERVISOR GONZALES, C.O.P.E. INVITE FAITH-BASED AND NON-PROFIT GROUPS TO A LOCAL DISCUSSION ON THE COUNTY'S REALIGNMENT PLAN

**SAN BERNARDINO** – Understanding the need for a broader discussion with local faithand community-based, non-profit organizations on San Bernardino County's Public Safety Realignment Plan, Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, along with Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E.), has planned a special community meeting on October 27.

During its September 27 meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved the county realignment plan in direct response to AB 109, the Public Safety Realignment Act. The Act, as of October 1, basically transferred supervision of "low-level" offenders from the state to the counties where they were originally sentenced.

"This change in supervision impacts us in ways we cannot yet begin to imagine," Gonzales said. "Our county departments, led by Chief Probation Officer Michelle Scray, have developed a precisely structured plan to address this arduous responsibility that has been placed upon us."

"Our goal is to create a strategically designed environment that will help willing men and women turn their lives around and become productive members of their communities," Gonzales added. "We know partnering with our local faith-based and non-profit groups is essential to reducing recidivism rates and enabling positive personal transformations. That's why this meeting is so important."

The meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27, from 2-4 p.m. at the Inghram Community Center, 2050 Mt. Vernon Ave., San Bernardino.

"As constituents and a representative of the leaders within communities, we believe that this forum will be an awesome opportunity to test the notion of true partnership and collaboration," said Rev. Samuel Casey, executive director of C.O.P.E. "As a policy driving organization, our goal in this process is to connect the community that will have the greatest impact with persons who are in the greatest need."

"The County's Realignment Plan will only be successful if the county and the community enter into true partnership. The faith-based, community-based organizations inevitably play the role as 'first responders', so its vitally important that these groups, which have the compassion, cultural competency, and willingness to act in that role be properly informed on what resources are available. We believe this is a first step on a thousand-mile journey," Rev. Casey added.

Representatives from the County Public Defender's Office, Probation, Behavioral and Public Health, District Attorney and Sheriff's departments will share updates on implementation of the plan and resource information to help the local groups who are typically the frontline resource for former offenders re-entering the community.

Anyone wishing more information can call (909) 387-4565. RSVPs called into the same number are requested by Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Fifth District includes the unincorporated areas of Bloomington, Muscoy, North Norton, El Rancho Verde, and Arrowhead Farms, the City of Rialto, major portions of the cities of Colton and San Bernardino, and the eastern portion of the City of Fontana.