



## *A Message From the District Attorney*



Dear Friends:

Advancing public safety is at the core of everything we do at the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. It is why we actively work with our law enforcement and community partners both to hold offenders accountable and to prevent crime.

I know there has been heightened focus on crime in our county – particularly an increase last year in homicides – and I want to address that with you.

Let me be clear: One homicide is one too many. My heart aches for all families who have lost loved ones to violence. I and everyone in my office will make sure there will be serious consequences for anyone who shows no compassion for human life, and we always will be by the side of crime victims; you have my word on that.

Yes, this office no longer seeks the death penalty because it has been shown time and again that it targets people of color and does not deter crime. We scaled back sentencing enhancements because research shows they exacerbate racial disparities in the justice system and have never improved safety.

Those who argue that these changes are the reason homicides have increased are incorrect. There have been increases in homicides nationwide, whether that jurisdiction is enacting policies like ours or not. Some places outside of California have experienced their worst year for homicides on record. These tragic circumstances go well beyond any policy in this office.

But that does not mean that I or anyone in my office merely accepts this increase in killings, of course. I am committed to proactively addressing the root causes of violent crime. I created our Community Violence Reduction Division, in which prosecutors are embedded in communities where violence has been prevalent. We work with police, of course, but also collaborate with violence interrupters, community groups and other agencies to address the issues of these communities holistically. And, yes, when a killing occurs, it receives the full attention of our office, and we will do all in our power to make sure the person is prosecuted.

Again, as it has been during my 40 years working in public safety and throughout the history of the District Attorney's Office, holding those who break the law accountable and supporting crime survivors are at our foundation. Always.

With respect and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Gascón".

George Gascón  
District Attorney