Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Schools

I’d like to share with you my deep concerns about the safety of our homes, streets, neighborhoods and schools, and how we must act, decisively and immediately, to rebuild and restore the strength, morale and effectiveness of our police department.

While overall crime rates have declined, acts of violent crime and crimes committed by juveniles remain alarmingly high. Senior Lead officers assigned to the Valley, essential to the successful implementation of effective community-based policing, were first eliminated and then “restored,” but never to previously acceptable levels.

Nearly half the square miles patrolled by the LAPD and 35% of the city’s population are in the Valley, yet only 25% of the force is assigned here. For far too long we simply have not received our fair share of police officers.

LAPD staffing and morale have hit unacceptable lows. Once 9,800 officers strong, the force, now hovers near 9,100. Recent statistics peg LAPD turnover at 30%, with a record 332 officers resigning last year alone.

To make matters worse, the City Council, seemingly oblivious to sharp increases in violent and juvenile crime in the Valley, has entered into an agreement with the Department of Justice that could harm the Valley even more, by taking between 300-500 more officers off patrol to monitor the Rampart Consent Decree. In addition, the closing of the West Valley jail means more officers off patrol longer and, as a result, we face unacceptable increases in response times.

I’ve spent the last 12 years on the staff of Councilman Hal Bernson, fighting to make the Valley a safer place to live, work and raise a family. I worked closely with him to establish “Public Safety First” as the highest priority in the City budget.

I drafted the successful graffiti abatement ordinance that created citizen rewards and posted 300 anti-graffiti billboards citywide, served on the City’s Domestic Violence Task Force and am a member of the Mid Valley Police Council. I am proud to have the endorsement of our city’s top crime fighter, Mayor Richard Riordan.
“As your City Councilwoman, I’ll work to restore the LAPD to full strength and fight to make sure that the men and women of law enforcement have the resources they need to keep our families safe from crime and violence.”

Experience that will keep our neighborhoods safe

Every neighborhood must be a safe place to live, learn, and raise a family
- Increase police patrols in West Valley neighborhoods, improve response times
- Tough enforcement of domestic violence laws
- Mandatory prison sentences for hate crimes

Rebuild the strength, restore the morale of the LAPD
- Hire 1,000 new police officers to patrol Valley neighborhoods
- Restore the Senior Lead Officer program to full strength
- Oppose federal efforts to take 500 officers off our streets to enforce Rampart Consent Decree
- Oppose closure of West Valley Jail

Teachers can’t teach and kids can’t learn in schools that aren’t safe
- Establish “Neighborhood KidWatch” to protect children on the way to and from school
- LAPD checkpoints near schools to search vehicles for weapons
- Prosecute repeat violent juvenile offenders as adults

Prevent Crime
- Expand successful after school education and recreation programs
- Fully fund early childhood development programs aimed at at-risk youth
- Keep guns away from our children: prosecute criminals who sell or possess illegal guns

Endorsements:
Mayor Richard Riordan
Valley Councilman Hal Bernson
Sherman Oaks Homeowners’ Association President Richard Close
L.A. City Police Commission Chair Raquelle de la Rocha