



Member Profiles

Rachel Rios, Chair, of Sacramento was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Ms. Rios has been Executive Director at La Familia Counseling Center Inc. since 2012. She served in several positions at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from 1984 to 2012, including Chief Deputy Secretary of the Division of Juvenile Justice, Director of Juvenile Parole Operations, Case Services Administrator, Youth Authority Administrator, Assistant Superintendent at the Northern Youth Correctional Reception Center and Clinic, Supervising Parole Agent and Juvenile Parole Agent.

Carol Biondi, Vice Chair, of Los Angeles was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 28, 2005. Ms. Biondi has served as a Commissioner on the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families since 1999. She also serves as a Board Member for The National Children's Defense Fund, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition and ManifestWorks.

The Honorable Brian Back of Camarillo was appointed to the SACJJDP on December 18, 2012. After 20 years on the bench, including serving as Presiding Judge and Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, he retired from the Ventura County Superior Court in 2018. He was an attorney with Arnold Back Mathews Wojkowski and Zirbel LLP from 1990 to 1997, Arnold and Back from 1989 to 1990, and Nordman Cormany Hair and Compton LLP from 1977 to 1989. He earned a Master of Arts degree in government from Claremont Graduate School and a Juris Doctorate degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law. He has taught numerous courses related to juvenile law and delinquency prevention. He is also a past member of the California Judicial Council as well as the Council's Juvenile & Family Law Advisory Committee.

Amanda Ayala of San Jose was appointed to the SACJJDP on October 31, 2019. From 2017 - 2020 Ms. Ayala was the policy and advocacy associate at the Bill Wilson Center. In 2021, she was named Co-Director of A Way Home America. She earned a Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from Northwestern University.

Dr. B.J. Davis of Elk Grove was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Dr. Davis has been an Adjunct Professor at Alliant International University, California School of Professional Psychology since 2008 and Executive Director and Clinical Director at Strategies For Change since 2006. He was a part-time Clinical Consultant and Therapist at AIDS Housing Alliance from 2009 to 2011 and owner at Davis Counseling from 2005 to 2012. Dr. Davis held several positions at the Sierra Council on Alcoholism and Drug

Dependence from 1999 to 2010, including Clinical Supervisor and Counselor. He earned a Doctor of Psychology degree in clinical psychology from Alliant International University, California School of Professional Psychology.

Carly B. Dierkhising, PhD, was appointed to the SACJJDP on May 11, 2016. Dr. Dierkhising is an Associate Professor at Cal State LA in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics. She holds a doctorate in Developmental Psychology and a masters in Clinical Psychology. Dr. Dierkhising is committed to developing actionable research and translating research to practice and policy in order to improve the lives of trauma-exposed and system-involved youth. Prior to coming to Cal State LA, she worked for the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress on various initiatives to create trauma-informed child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Clinically trained, Dr. Dierkhising has also worked at a Los Angeles County Probation Camp as a clinical intern. Her publications and research grants are on topics related to trauma-informed gang intervention, trauma and delinquency, crossover or dual system youth, commercial sexual exploitation of youth, and creating trauma-informed systems.

Miguel A. Garcia was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Garcia is currently the Advocacy Coordinator for the Anti-Recidivism Coalition and is a member/consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Justice Strategy Group Youth Advisory Council and Northwestern University's Center for Child Trauma, Assessment, Services, and Intervention. Mr. Garcia's personal experience has helped inform his thinking on youth justice. Mr. Garcia is heavily involved in his community as a youth justice advocate, a passion that began after his own experiences with the justice system. Mr. Garcia has previously worked with Human Rights Watch as a fellow, and with Impact Justice on restorative justice practices. He has served on the Riverside County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Committee and was the former Western Regional Board Member for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice executive board and on California's Juvenile Justice subcommittee at the Child Welfare Council, focused on implementing the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR). Mr. Garcia is a graduate of UC Riverside, and will attend law school this fall to continue his advocacy work in youth justice and human rights.

Juan Gomez was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Gomez is a proud father to Rayo Tamoxtzin (Honorable Lightning Spirit Ray). In addition, he has dedicated his adult life to being a cultural broker, movement builder, and is both a barrios "community" scholar and storyteller. Mr. Gomez is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of MILPA where he works to build next generation leadership while supporting healing informed team building. Throughout his career he has provided technical assistance for various youth justice strategies and initiatives; where he co-created training, strategic facilitation, and capacity building efforts. Mr. Gomez was raised by his grandparents Amelia and Ampelio and is of Coahuiltecan Nation and of Chicano indigenous descent.

Michelle Guymon of West Covina was appointed to the SACJJDP on October 31, 2019. Ms. Guymon has served in multiple positions at the Los Angeles County Probation Department since 1989, including group supervisor, deputy probation officer, supervising deputy probation officer, and probation director. She earned a Master of Social Welfare degree in social work from California State University, San Bernardino.

Susan Harbert of Pacific Palisades was appointed to the SACJJDP on January 19, 2007. Ms. Harbert is currently Staff Attorney at the Juvenile Innocence and Fair Sentencing Clinic at Loyola Law School and has served as Special Legislative Counsel to the Center for Juvenile Law and Policy at Loyola Law School since 2006. She previously was Executive Vice President of Series Development for MGM Television from 1989 to 1992 and worked for ABC Entertainment as a Director and Executive Producer from 1986 to 1989.

Elloitt Housman-Turrubiate of Redwood City was appointed on October 31, 2019. Mr. Housman-Turrubiate received his undergraduate degrees from Colorado State University in Ethnic Studies and English Literature and an M.A. in Native American Studies at UC Davis. Mr. Housman-Turrubiate was a product of the Key Communities; a campus program designed to support first-generation students and students of color through their first years in college. Mr. Housman-Turrubiate spent two years as a Direct Care Counselor at a youth residential treatment facility. Mr. Housman-Turrubiate currently provides culturally integrated crisis intervention, case management, and mentoring services to Native youth in Sacramento County. Mr. Housman-Turrubiate is a descendant of the Yaqui and Tohono O'odham Nations.

Gordon Jackson was appointed to the SACJJDP on January 21, 2009. Mr. Jackson is currently the National Director of 3Strands Global Foundation's PROTECT Prevention Education and Training Program. He is tasked to manage the implementation of the program that focuses on protecting school age children from human trafficking in the USA and internationally. Prior to joining 3Strands Global Foundation two years ago, Gordon enjoyed a 40-year career in public education that included opportunities as a high school French, English, and Speech/Drama teacher, vice principal, principal and as an executive in the California Department of Education, where he led a division that focused its energies on meeting the needs of California's most vulnerable students.

Throughout his career, Gordon has enjoyed a wide variety of opportunities to make a difference. He served as Board President of the Woodland Joint Unified School District, provided assistance to number of companies and agencies as a communication consultant, and has provided a number of keynote speeches at events where school climate, student behavior, school attendance, and cultural awareness were the focus. Gordon is a graduate of CSU Chico and the Universite d'Aix-Marseille, France.

Ramon Leija of Indio was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Leija was also appointed in 2019 to the Constituent Affairs Representative for the Office of the Governor. Mr. Leija has been a Subcommittee Member at the Riverside County Juvenile

Justice Coordinating Council since 2021. He was previously a Youth Mentor in East Coachella Valley since 2014 and a Juvenile Justice Reform Advocate at the Anti-Recidivism Coalition since 2010. Mr. Leija was a Volunteer Reserve Firefighter/EMT at the Riverside County Fire Department from 2015 to 2019. He was Eastern Coachella Valley Boys and Men of Color Initiative Coordinator from 2013 to 2014. Mr. Leija earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Riverside in Political Science and Education.

Kent Mendoza of Los Angeles was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Mendoza is the Manager of Advocacy and Community Organizing at the ARC. Mr. Mendoza is also the Spokespersons for the Campaign For Youth Justice (CFYJ) based out of Washington D.C. Mr. Mendoza was appointed to serve as an at-large community representative for the fifth supervisorial district to the Los Angeles Countywide Juvenile Justice Coordinated Council (JJCC) in 2018 and was re-appointed in 2020. Mr. Mendoza was also selected as an Aspen Institute Ricardo Salinas Scholar in 2018. He recently served as a lead Youth Justice Work Group consultant under the Burns Institute (BI) in LA County to develop a report with recommendations on moving youth out of the County's probation department completely. Mr. Mendoza previously worked at the LA Area Chamber of Commerce on smart justice issues where he held several positions from 2014 to 2016, including Senior Administrative Assistant, Assistant, and intern. Mr. Mendoza completed the 2015 Commission Training Program offered by the Wally Mark Leadership Institute from the Liberty Hill Foundation.

Amika Mota of Oakland was appointed to the SACJJDP on August 27, 2018. Mrs. Mota is the Statewide Policy Director at the Young Women's Freedom Center. She was previously the Prison Reentry Director at the Young Women's Freedom Center until 2019. She was a legal assistant at California Traffic Defenders from 2015 to 2016, lead engineer and firefighter at Madera County Fire Station 5 from 2012 to 2015, and Assistant Director at the Andaluz Waterbirth Center from 1999 to 2005. Mrs. Mota also serves as a Board Member for For The People.

Vanessa Najar of Sacramento was appointed to the SACJJDP on August 27, 2018. Ms. Najar has been a peer mentor at the Puente Project at Sacramento City College since 2017. She was a canvasser at United Latinos in 2016, peer mentor at Luther Burbank Library in 2016, project committee member at La Familia from 2015 to 2016 and office assistant at St. Anne's Parish from 2015 to 2016.

District Attorney Nancy O'Malley of Alameda was appointed to the SACJJDP on October 21, 2011. Ms. O'Malley is the Alameda County District Attorney and is the first woman to serve as Alameda County's District Attorney. D.A. O'Malley is a national and statewide leader known for her innovation and vision. She has led criminal justice reform efforts. She has created several model programs, including the Family Justice Center, that serve, support, and empower victims of crime and youth who experience or witness violence. DA O'Malley is a national expert and has led groundbreaking work in combatting

human trafficking, particularly involving minor victims. She created the first 'Girls Court' in the Juvenile Justice system to work with vulnerable young women, including trafficked youth; the Young Women's Empowerment Program to support young women in the Juvenile system and SafetyNet, which creates Safety Plans for vulnerable youth, many of whom are homeless or being sex trafficked. She has held several statewide conferences "All Things Teen" which focuses on the health and well-being of youth, particularly those who found themselves in the Juvenile or Social Service systems. DA O'Malley has received numerous statewide and federal awards for her work as well as awards from community organizations for her collaborative, innovative work.

Winston Peters of Los Angeles was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 21, 2006. He is an Assistant Public Defender in the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office. Mr. Peters is a former Chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Judicial Appointments Committee and a former member of its Board of Trustees. He is a recipient of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Livingston Hall Juvenile Justice Award, and the Pacific Juvenile Defender Center's, Defender of the Year Award, for service in the field of juvenile justice. Mr. Peters is a former member of Governor Brown's Juvenile Justice Workgroup and former President of the California Public Defender's Association. He earned a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law and an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dr. Mimi Silbert of San Francisco was appointed to the SACJJDP on April 19, 2005. Dr. Silbert has served as Chief Executive Officer and President of the Delancey Street Foundation since 1974. She was the Director for the Center for Institutional Change at San Francisco State University from 1973 to 1975. Dr. Silbert earned her Doctorate in Criminology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Dante Williams of Sacramento was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Williams has been a youth advocate Manager at Stanford Youth Solutions since 2016, where he was a Lead Youth Advocate from 2011 to 2016. He has been a Volunteer Juvenile Justice Chaplain at the Sacramento County Probation Department since 2010. Mr. Williams is Co- chair of the Sacramento County Mental Health Services Act Steering Committee.