



Member Profiles

Rachel Rios, Chair, of Sacramento was appointed to the SACJJD 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. Ms. Rios was a Case Manager at Diogenes Youth Services Inc. from 1981 to 1984 and at Consejos Inc. from 1979 to 1981.

Carol Biondi, Vice Chair, of Los Angeles was appointed to the SACJJD 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 SACJJD 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.

Dr. B.J. Davis of Elk Grove was appointed to the SACJJD 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 SACJJD on May 11, 2016. Dr. Dierkhising is an Assistant Professor at Cal State LA in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics. She holds a doctorate in Developmental Psychology and a master's in Clinical Psychology. Her primary area of research is in trauma and juvenile justice with a focus on how to improve services for trauma-exposed youth in the juvenile justice system from both a practice and policy perspective. 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 current work focuses on crossover youth, commercial sexual exploitation of youth, and developing trauma-informed gang intervention programs.

Miguel A. Garcia was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Garcia is an Advocacy Coordinator with the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. He was previously a part of the Restorative Justice Project at Impact Justice. While at Impact Justice, he helped to assist jurisdictions throughout California and other states in customizing and implementing restorative youth diversion models to meet local/community/jurisdictional needs. He also helped develop materials related to restorative juvenile diversion, including policy and procedures manuals, reports, presentations, reports, and other materials. As a public policy fellow with Human Rights Watch, he worked in California's Inland Empire and Fresno areas to educate community members on why the state should not charge 14-and 15-year-olds as adults. Mr. Garcia served as the youngest commissioner ever appointed to the Riverside County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Committee. He is the former Western Regional Board Member for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice executive board. He is a member/consultant for the Annie E. Casey Juvenile Justice Strategy Group Youth Advisory Council and Northwestern University's Center for Child Trauma, Assessment, Services, and Intervention. Miguel has a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations from the University of California, Riverside. Additionally, he has three associate degrees from Riverside City College. Aside from his work and academics, 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 as a teenager. He plans to attend law school to continue his advocacy work in youth justice and human rights.

Juan Gomez was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Gomez has been Co-founder and Director of Programs and Innovation at Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement since 2013 and Senior Policy and Strategy Advisor at the National Compadres Network since 2012. He was a Coordinator at the Sierra Health Foundation's Positive Youth Justice Initiative in 2015, Senior Consultant at Frontline Solutions from 2012 to 2013, and a fellow at the California Endowment from 2011 to 2012. Mr. Gomez was a program coordinator at Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos from 2007 to 2011, a Youth Advocate at Friday Night Live from 2004 to 2007 and a Case Manager at the Community Restoration Project from 2004 to 2007.

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.

Gordon Jackson of Woodland was appointed to the SACJJDP on January 21, 2009. Mr. Jackson is a retired Director and administrator of the California Department of Education (CDE). He served as the first Principal for Natomas High School, a position he held from 1993 to 1999. Mr. Jackson previously worked at Woodland High School where he served as a teacher from 1995 to 1990 and as Vice Principal from 1990 to 1993. He started his high school teaching career in 1980.

Ramon Leija of Indio was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Leija is currently a Constituent Affairs Representative with the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. Mr. Leija has been a Volunteer Reserve Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician at the Riverside County Fire Department since 2016 and Volunteer Youth Mentor at the Regional Access Project Foundation's Coachella Valley Youth Leadership Mentoring Project since 2014. He has been a Juvenile Justice Reform Advocate at the Anti-Recidivism Coalition since 2010. Mr. Leija was Coordinator for Raices Cultura at the Eastern Coachella Valley Boys and Men of Color from 2013 to 2014.

Kent Mendoza of Los Angeles was appointed to the SACJJDP on November 9, 2016. Mr. Mendoza has been Policy Coordinator at the Anti-Recidivism Coalition since July 18, 2017, and Community and Member Relations Coordinator from 2016 to 2017. He held several positions at the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce from 2014 to 2016, including Senior Administrative Assistant, and intern, and completed the 2015 Commission Training Program offered by the Wally Mark Leadership Institute at the Liberty Hill Foundation. Mr. Mendoza is also the Spokespersons for the Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) based out of Washington D.C. Mr. Mendoza was also appointed in 2018 to serve as a community representative for the fifth supervisorial district to the Los Angeles Countywide Juvenile Justices Coordinated Council (JJCC). Mr. Mendoza brings five-years of first-hand experience of the juvenile and criminal justice system to SACJJDP.

Amika Mota of Oakland was appointed to the SACJJDP on August 27, 2018. Ms. Mota has been Prison Reentry Director at Young Women's Freedom Center since 2015. 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.

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 has served as Alameda County District Attorney since 2009, after working as an Attorney in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office since 1984. She received a Juris Doctorate from Golden Gate University School of Law, and a Doctor of Law in 2012.

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 was a youth advocate Manager at Stanford Youth Solutions from 2016 to 2019, where he was also 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.