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Keynotes



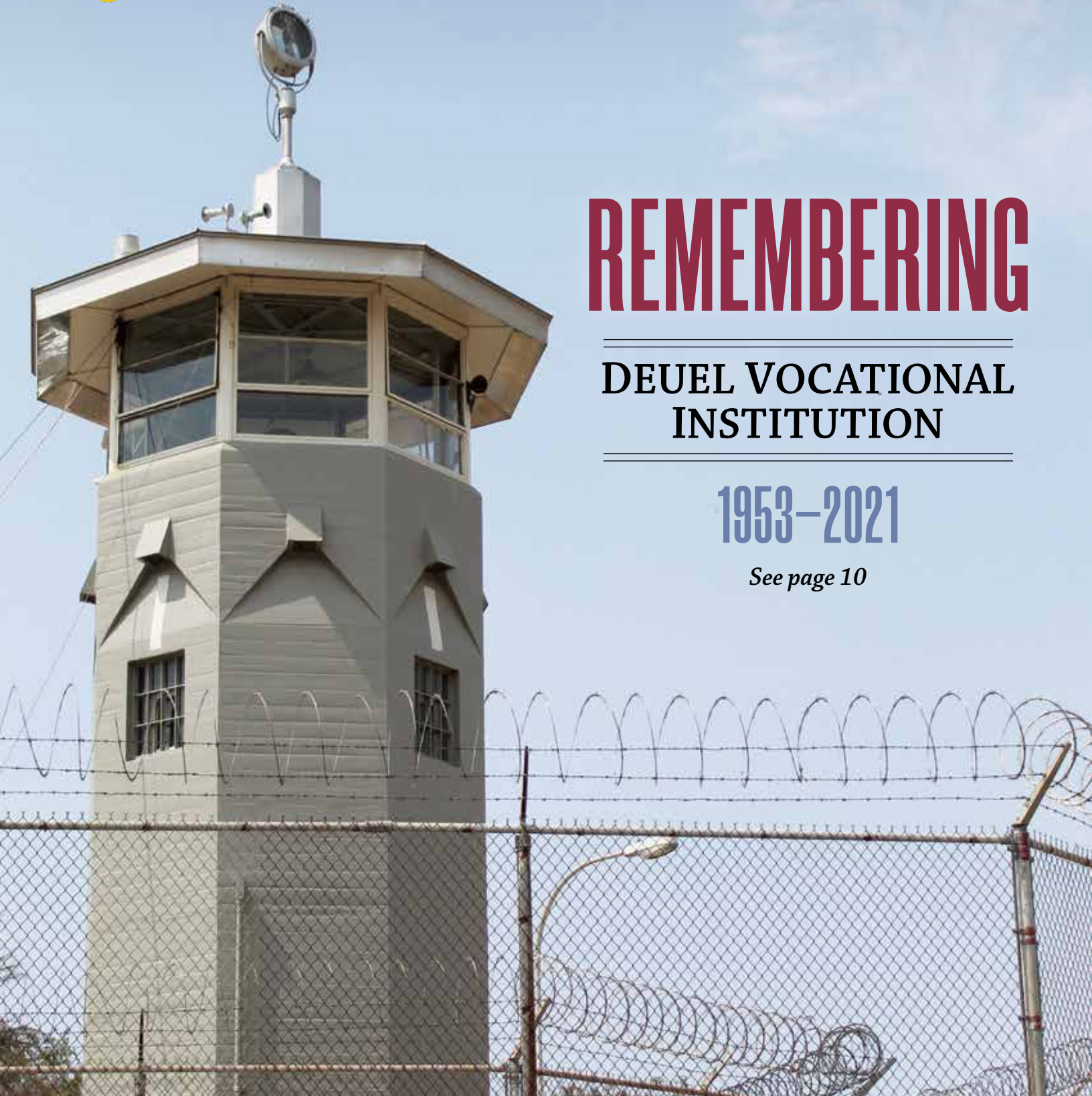
CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISORS ORGANIZATION

REMEMBERING

DEUEL VOCATIONAL
INSTITUTION

1953–2021

See page 10



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SUPERVISORS REPRESENTING SUPERVISORS



ART GONZALES
CCSO State President

Strength in Numbers

The California Correctional Supervisors Organization's (CCSO) motto has always been "Supervisors Representing Supervisors." It was the vision that founded our organization almost 30 years ago and still holds true to this day. CCSO has continued to fight for the respect, rights and working conditions of excluded employees. Excluded employees don't have the luxury to lean on a contract to dispute violations. If you think the bargaining unit contract protects you, unfortunately, you are wrong. If you think grievances and labor issues are handled in the same manner, you're wrong again. So, I must ask — why let a rank-and-file labor union negotiate on your behalf? For what purpose? What can they do for you? Do you truly think they have your best interest at heart when they



are representing thousands of your subordinates?

In my early years as a CCSO member, I got involved with my local board, as well as the state board. I was passionate about an organization that supported me, and I wanted to participate and learn as much as possible. I quickly found out my colleagues didn't feel the same way, and I was constantly defending CCSO. My co-workers would tell me that CCSO was run by a bunch of old, retired supervisors. The rank-and-file staff would walk around and mock CCSO, saying the organization wouldn't be around for long. I must admit, I was slightly worried; back then, we only had roughly 2,000 members. But here we are, years later, with almost 5,000 members, and we are stronger than ever. Throughout my 28-year CDCR career, I needed

CCSO assistance with legal representation and labor disputes. Each time, CCSO fully supported me, and I was lucky that most had positive outcomes. However, not once during my career did I hear about positive support or a victory for supervisors by a rank-and-file organization.

So, you may ask, what does the future hold? My goal is to make CCSO the exclusive representative for S06-excluded employees. It is time to cut ties with the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA). It is time to stop a rank-and-file organization from meddling in our labor issues. What can they do for us that we can't do ourselves? There are two ways to lead; you either divide and conquer or build and unite. I'm done being divided

Continued on page 6

CCSO 2021 ODD-NUMBERED ELECTION RESULTS



CHAPTER	CHAPTER PRESIDENT POSITION/RANK/NAME	VICE PRESIDENT POSITION/RANK/NAME
SCC	Lt. Tessa Chambers	Lt. Garland Austin
PBSP	Sgt. Scott Skerik	Sgt. Jennifer Hurley
MCSP	Sgt. Josh Watson	Lt. Jeremy Austin
RJD	Sgt. Alexis Gonzalez	Lt. Wendee Smith
CCI	Sgt. Mike Worrell	Lt. Patricia Stevens
NKSP	Lt. Ismael Quintero	Sgt. Chris Hazel
CAL	Lt. Paul Preciado	Lt. Arturo Alderete
CIW	Lt. Rudy Arellano	Lt. Refugio Jimenez
PVSP	Lt. Daniel May	Lt. Chris Nevarez
WSP	Sgt. Thomas Counts	Sgt. Lanford Blansett
COR	Sgt. Jim Davidson	Lt. Vincent Marmolejo
CSATF	Lt. Christian Gray	Sgt. Ernest Rocha
SVSP	Lt. Jose Cermeno	Lt. Sandeep Bangar
CCWF	Lt. George Roberts	Lt. Jason Collier
CTF	Lt. Eric Da Rosa	Sgt. Sean Kelley
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CVSP	Lt. John Hernandez Jr.	Lt. Mike Platt
HDSP	Lt. Charlie Hahn	Lt. Justin Ginder
CHCF	Lt. Brent Burkhardt	Lt. David Richardson
DSH/NSH	HP Sgt. Jessica Heine	
CCC	Sgt. Juston Struthers	Lt. Casey Weeks
DSH/CSH	HP Sgt. Kevin Jones	HP Sgt. Michael McVay
CCHCS HQ	Capt. Mike Gomez	

Continued from page 4

— let's build and unite! For years, CCPOA has had a monopoly on the custody side, and I believe it's time for a change. We're capable of accomplishing so much on our own; just think about what we can accomplish as a united front.


I am committed to getting a health care package that is competitive with CCPOA. Why should we have to join an organization just to get better health care for ourselves and our families? I frequently hear people say that if it wasn't for the health care, they would not be a CCPOA member. It seems to me to be a huge conflict of interest by the state and CCPOA when excluded employees are unable to get a

There are two ways to lead; you either divide and conquer or build and unite. I'm done being divided — let's build and unite!

comparable health care package without being a member.

Let's also get rid of the Supervisors' VP. Why do we need them? We already have limited sergeant and lieutenant posts. What do they do other than report back to the local president? Again, another conflict of interest by an organization representing both rank-and-file and excluded employees. We could get so much more accomplished and have so

many more wins for excluded employees by having just one organization who solely represents them and not their staff.

CCSO is flourishing — we are stronger than ever. I felt we were moving in the right direction until the pandemic hit, and I'm ready to get back on track. In my first four years, I had a vision, and I came through on my promises. I laid down a solid foundation and put systems in place to make great strides moving forward. I'm ready to carry on CCSO's legacy, our motto and vision; supervisors representing supervisors. This is a call to action, and I need your help and support. There is strength in numbers, and we are here to thrive! 

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CCSF SECOND ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



CCSF held our second annual charity golf tournament on Friday, September 10, at the Lincoln Hills Golf Club. Approximately 150 members and affiliates attended the event. There were numerous games throughout the course, including a golf ball launcher, closest to the pin winner and a chance to beat State President Art Gonzales! Lunch and drinks were provided on the course, and dinner was served following the tournament, along with the announcements of raffle winners. The event was a huge success, and we had a tie for first place between the J.R. Oviedo Law Group and High Desert State Prison. If you missed this year's event, no worries! We will be there again next year. Also, since our tournament was such a great success, we are branching out to the Central Valley and have another tournament planned in Bakersfield on March 11, 2022. Mark your calendars and head over to the website to register today! CCSF is extremely appreciative of our donors, attendees and volunteers — thank you for your generosity and help, which made it a great day! 🗝️



CCSF

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Photos by Raquel Montoya

THE END OF AN ERA

DEUEL VOCATIONAL INSTITUTION (1953–2021)

Home of the Gladiator School

Sabrina Harris-Brennan |
CCSO State Secretary

On Wednesday, July 28, 2021, the very last inmates were driven out of DVI. After months of closed intake and COVID-19 outbreaks, staff and inmate transfers, DVI's days came to an end. I started my career at DVI in 1996, so leaving it behind after 25 years has not been easy.

One of the best outcomes of this otherwise unfortunate event is the bonds between the staff and how we have all stepped up for one another.

I had the privilege to stay back a few extra weeks before moving on to my new prison and was able to set up some tours for staff and their families to walk through one last time. I got to see some old-timers, some newcomers and several of my closest colleagues. I loved seeing the looks on the faces of their children and spouses while walking through the empty hallways of DVI. For some, it was a last walk to say goodbye. For others, it was a proud moment to

show their family where they've spent so many hours away — a rare inside look at these prison walls. I loved hearing the stories staff had at different areas of the prison as we walked through together, wide-eyed and in awe of this old golden structure that we all called home. Each tour was the same but also different, with the history each former staff member brought with them. I feel incredibly honored to have been part of these special moments, a part of their farewells to our good old DVI.

One of my favorite last days was the day I gave my CCSO staff a tour. We always call them the ladies of the office, and they really are the best ladies. They put up with all the men who work in the office, our former colleagues nonetheless, and take great care of them.

Most of these ladies had never set foot inside one of our prisons, so it was great to finally be able to bring them in so that they got a better idea of what we talk about inside the walls. We at CCSO are extremely fortunate to have these ladies in our corner. I can attest that they always make me feel so welcome and appreciated. I really can't thank them enough for their hard work and assistance. Being able to



show them around and tell them about my history at DVI was one of the best ways I could have closed out my time. I walked out with them alongside me, taking in the prison and every memory it holds.

I grew up at DVI. I spent half my life there. Each relationship and memory I have are priceless, and no one can ever take those away from me. Change is not easy, and I wish the best for my former staff and partners wherever they ended up. This entire closure process has been rough on all of us. Unfortunately, things have not gone as smooth or seamless as we were told. Our lives and emotions have been turned upside down so many different times since the closure announcement late last year. But I say this to my DVI comrades — keep your heads up! I know things will never be the same but make the best of it and always remember where you came from. There will always be a small part of me that stays at DVI. Although I had to move to another prison to finish my career and retire, I will always be a DVI Gladiator. End of Watch: DVI (1953-2021). 🗝️





BEHIND THE BADGE

MEET SERGEANT VANESSA MELENDEZ

For as long as CDCR Sergeant Vanessa Melendez can remember, giving back has been in her nature. It's one reason she was drawn to law enforcement, a career path first introduced to her by a longtime family friend turned mentor, who was a Bell Police Department officer and recently retired as chief of the Vernon Police Department after 30 years of service.

Melendez started her peace officer career as a correctional officer at High Desert State Prison before promoting to correctional sergeant and soon after lateraling to the Background Unit. After joining the Department in 2013, Melendez quickly immersed herself in several important causes, including “taking part in CDCR’s Peer Support Program, speaking to different schools about what a CDCR career offers and serving as a Pink Patch Project ambassador,” she explains. But in 2018, Melendez longed to get involved in a different cause, one that “bridged gaps within our community” and allowed her to serve as a role model for the next generation.

That’s when she discovered Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS), a nonprofit that makes meaningful,



monitored matches between adult volunteers (Bigs) and children (Littles), ages 5 through young adulthood in communities across the country. In Sacramento, a large percentage of the young people served by BBBS face varying socioeconomic challenges and are raised by a single parent or have both parents working full-time jobs. Melendez joined the local BBBS of the Greater Sacramento Area agency, and because she's a peace officer, she was placed in the program's Bigs With Badges program, which connects youth with officers and first responders. The initiative aims to help young people see officers in a positive light and build long-lasting relationships and trust in the community.

As one of only approximately six CDCR background sergeants in the state assigned as a computerized voice stress analyzer operator to screen peace officer candidates in the hiring process, Melendez ensures those interested in joining the force are screened in a comprehensive background investigation. When applying to become a Big Sister with the program, Melendez went through a rigorous process of her own.

"There's an in-depth screening process involved," Melendez explains. "Some components of this process include an application, a live scan and background check, a DMV record check and a long but effective interview where they evaluate you and note key factors about you in order to match you as best as possible to a Little."

After a roughly two-month process, Melendez was matched with then-8-year-old A.J., and in no time, the two became inseparable. Melendez and A.J. spend at least six hours a month enjoying a variety of activities together, including tie-dyeing T-shirts, swimming, feeding the homeless at a local shelter, making slime, getting a bite to eat and playing with Melendez's French bulldogs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the two have stayed in touch through FaceTime and by exchanging text messages.

"A.J. and I have developed a sense of trust, which I cherish and nurture," Melendez says. "I enjoy watching her grow and flourish. She reminds me to laugh and have fun and get in tune with my inner kid. I've learned that when you give back, you develop this sense of well-being. It's always uplifting and healthy for the soul. The interesting thing about our match is that giving back is something A.J. and I have in common — it's where we thrive."

The close bond between Melendez and A.J. was quickly noticed by Melendez's husband, CDCR Captain Chance



Vanessa Melendez rappels down the Marriott Hotel in Downtown Sacramento as part of Over the Edge, a fundraising event that raised over \$28,000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Andes, who became a Big Brother to Christian, now 12, soon after Melendez matched with A.J. "Once I was matched with A.J., my husband saw how much fulfillment it brought to me and it inspired him to become a Big as well," Melendez shares.

Last year, Melendez's mentoring efforts were recognized when she was named Big Sister of the Year by BBBS of the Sacramento Area. "It was one of the highest honors I have earned," Melendez says. "To have been granted this award means so much more than receiving a title or plaque. I feel that it's a representation of the impact a Big can make and represents all the amazing CDCR staff who mentor on a daily basis and have been or are part of various mentorship programs. They share this award with me."

In a time when bridging the gap between the community and law enforcement is as important as ever, Melendez believes programs like BBBS play a crucial role in creating long-term change in our communities.

"It's vital for those of us in the law enforcement community to make every effort to connect with our communities," she says. "It's also important for us to allow our true intentions and heart to come through the vest we wear on our chest and to show our communities we are more than a badge and a uniform. I am a daughter, a sister, a happy wife, a bonus mom, a Frenchie mom and a friend. I, too, feel the hurt and anguish our communities are feeling right now. However, I refuse to sit idly by and not get involved in being the change. With BBBS, you can plant positive seeds in our communities. The youth is our future, so why not invest your heart into them?" 🔑



— THINK — PINK OCTOBER

Stronger Together

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month this October, CCSO is paying tribute to those who've never given up and have continued to fight day in and day out against breast cancer. No matter what, the men and women of CCSO will be there to support the brave officers and their families through all the ups and downs.

Thank you to those who shared photos of themselves donning pink patches on their uniforms as part of the Pink Patch Project, an innovative public awareness campaign meant to bring attention to the fight against breast cancer. We are in this together! 🔑



Peace officers proudly showing their support for breast cancer awareness



Sgt. Sabrina Harris-Brennan and Sgt. Melana Paris



Officer Maria Jacquez

TO DEBATE, OR NOT TO DEBATE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

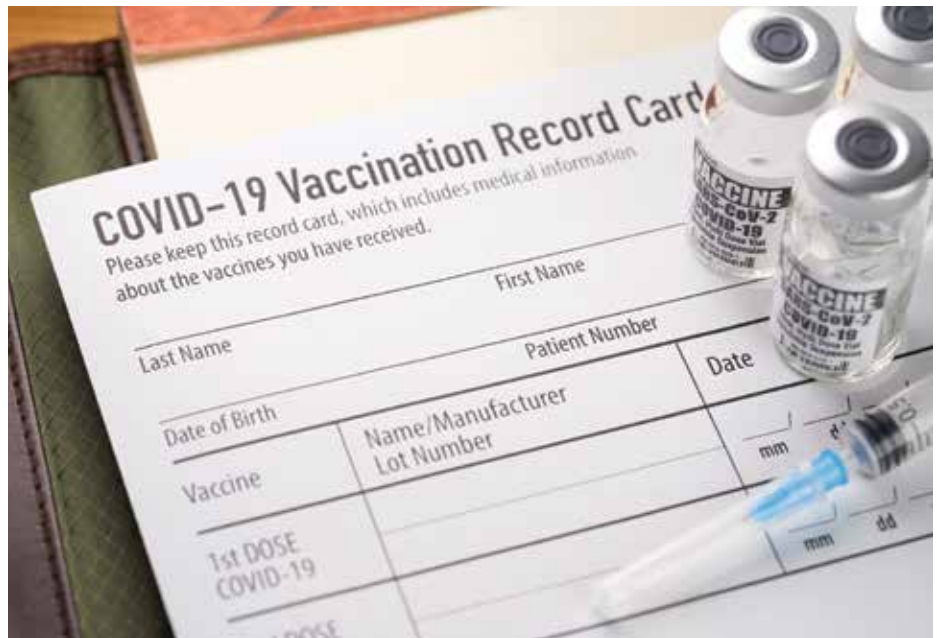
Mike Maldonado |
Correctional Lt., Calipatria State Prison

We are living in unusual times, and the pandemic and many players have created untenable situations for all of us. Politics, politicians and news organizations have certainly impacted our views, either positively or negatively, dependent on your opinions. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted all of our lives in one shape or form. Currently, one of the hottest topics impacting CDCR and staff is the vaccine mandate.

The vaccine has already been mandated for a small portion of personnel. This mandate was ordered by the California Department of Public Health officer of the state. It is my perception that the Department is taking a back seat, as it does not want to deal with this issue and would prefer for someone else to do the mandating for CDCR to take these actions.

After these mandates were provided to CDCR employees, I observed numerous CCSO members and representatives putting out emails regarding their personal views of being mandated to vaccinate. I held back on this because of the sensitive nature of this issue. I was very surprised at some of these posts. Some of these emails also seemed to call out our state president for not doing enough or not doing enough to their satisfaction. Even after the state president put out a memo and legal opinion, there were some CCSO members who still were not satisfied.

I understand that this subject is a very emotional issue and people are passionate about it. However, just because a person is passionate, loud about it or gets others to email about it doesn't make their conclusion correct. This decision is about more than one or a few people. Whether you agree or not that any vaccine mandate is infringing upon your civil rights, it is an individual opinion, just as



the question of the possibility of infecting another from not being vaccinated is infringing upon that person's right not to be infected.

Currently, numerous businesses have mandated their employees to take the vaccine. They include private businesses, airlines, the military, and colleges and universities, to name a few. Some industries have proposed a \$200 monthly increase in their medical insurance for unvaccinated staff. How would something like that go over at CDCR, or if they made you pay for your own COVID testing because you refused the free vaccination at your work site? Agree or disagree, it looks like the writing may be on the wall in the near future.

Sometimes when an issue is so emotionally charged as this subject has become, the focus on the real issue gets blurred. I think this has become apparent. The premise of the vaccine mandate is for a commonly held practice known as the common good. We abide by these practices everywhere in our daily life. This includes the speed limits in certain areas, which we don't always agree with, or too many stop signs in certain areas. I don't like red

lights staying on too long or turning red when I approach the intersection. These are all instituted for the common good and basically infringe upon our civil rights in a free society, yet most of us still abide by them. If I don't obey these mandates, there are repercussions.

It is also noteworthy to remember that we work for CDCR, and regardless of classification, we are public servants and are held to a different and higher standard than the general public. The judges who deal with CDCR have already said as much; when the COVID testing mandate was put into place for all CDCR employees, it was because of the judge's view that we essentially brought COVID into the prisons and infected the inmate population.

I believe it was correct for State President Art Gonzales to take the position that he did, as indicated in the membership letter sent on August 25 to the statewide membership. The organization is about more than one person or their opinion on this matter. As president, he must take a neutral stance for the longevity of the organization, regardless of his own personal opinion. If there is a stance to be taken, he has also put that in motion, as evidenced by the information provided to the membership by CCSO's General Counsel.

This brings me to my final and most important point. I have observed many emails and heard a lot of people talking about getting religious and/or medical exemptions. If the exemption is legitimate, then more power to you. For others, I would caution that this is a very slippery slope. This is not something that the organization will generally inform people of since they are tasked with representing the membership. In many situations that I have heard, it is only an attempt to avert being mandated to take the vaccine.


I have seen people fired for a simple lie, \$85 of illegitimate per diem or an illegitimate time entry on an FLSA. With emotions this high, people tend to say and do unintelligent things. You must ask yourself, "Is it worth it? Is it worth my job if I get caught?" CCSO attorneys put this in perspective a short while ago during a virtual meeting. Most of our jobs are "million-dollar jobs" that include benefits such as medical and pension. Just calculate your monthly salary by the number of years left until retirement, and it will give you an idea of your earning potential. Not everyone has the benefit of a trade that they can go back to. However, if the pay and benefits were better at the other job, they would be employed there now.

As the state president and I can tell you, it is not worth getting fired over this. With the number of bogus terminations by CDCR that I have seen and been involved with, it is not worth it — unless you don't mind losing the millions of dollars you would have received during

the course of your employment and lifetime medical care, just to name a few of our many benefits.

CDCR is now a digital entity. Everything can be tracked. Many of the Department's administrative actions are done by email. When Stanley "Tookie" Williams was executed, hundreds of staff were disciplined by CDCR HQ. This is how it is done now. CDCR has also created processes that are not necessarily conducive to justice and the pursuit of the truth, such as Direct Adverse Actions and the Allegation Inquiry Management System (AIMS).

If a vaccine mandate for all comes out, the game rules change, especially if they find out you have been dishonest. Additionally, religious exemptions go through OIA. Emotionally vested people don't always say or make the best decisions. Not many of us can just quit when we don't agree with things. Therefore, CCSO will be the "calm in the middle of the storm" and provide sensible and intelligent information and decisions for the membership. This is why these people are in these positions and we pay dues.

Termination is extremely hard to come back from, even when you did absolutely nothing wrong. I have always told the membership that CCSO will most likely get your job back, but *you* are the one who must live through it until that happens. Please *"look before you leap."* 

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LEGISLATION

FAIR GRIEVANCE PROCESS FOR STATE SUPERVISORS



Ford Canutt |
Legislative Specialist

For over 20 years, CCSO has been fighting to get supervisors and managers a grievance system equivalent to rank-and-file employees, which includes arbitration. Our grievance system for excluded and exempt employees has been insufficient and unfair to settle labor disputes. The grievance process for supervisors has four levels, which end at CalHR. CalHR has not granted an excluded employee grievance in at least 20 years. In most cases, the grievant is 100% right, but CalHR will deny the grievance, forcing the individual or organization to either drop the issue or file a lawsuit in Superior Court. Many times the grievant decides to give up, which only favors the state of California.

CalHR forces the excluded employee organization to file in Superior Court to gain justice for the excluded employee. The court litigation process is expensive for these organizations, including the state of California, wasting millions in taxpayer dollars. For example, CalHR determined that BU6 rank-and-file employees were harmed, paid the rank-and-file employees and excluded the supervisors. Negotiations for supervisors fell on deaf ears, and the walk time case that was filed by CCSO has been ongoing for over 13 years. This



issue could have easily been settled in arbitration, saving the organizations and the state of California millions of dollars. Sending this case to arbitration would have been the fair and right thing for the state to do. CalHR has consistently proved to be unfair in excluded employee grievances, and when this case is settled, it is estimated that the state of California will have to pay over \$300 million. As this case has been litigated for over 13 years, some of the employees who filed the original grievance may have passed on or retired long ago. The walk time case is a prime example of a case that was originally filed in the excluded employee grievance

system 13 years ago. CalHR persistently refuses to deal with any supervisory issues simply by denying every excluded and exempt grievance that is not settled before reaching them.

All 21 bargaining units have arbitration rights, but excluded and exempt employees aligned with those bargaining units only have an insufficient grievance process that guarantees that their grievance will be denied if it reaches CalHR. In this day and age, you would think that the public would not stand for this unfairness, but CalHR has done a good job at keeping this issue out of the public eye.

CCSO, along with other excluded employee organizations, have introduced legislation over the past five years that would grant arbitration rights to the excluded employees. Each time the bill was vetoed by the governor at the request of CalHR. It appears CalHR does not want to be held accountable for being unfair in past years to the excluded and exempt employees and forced to conduct their office in a reasonable, fair manner. It is CalHR's responsibility to fairly settle labor disputes, but as long as they can pass it directly to the courts, it appears that they don't care what it costs the taxpayers. It is easier to kick the can down the road and get the issues off their back. Arbitration would end this ongoing practice, and this scares CalHR. Granting arbitration for excluded and exempt employees will not only save the taxpayers millions of dollars but will also boost the morale of the

hard-working men and women who supervise and manage many state employees. It is disheartening to see the state treat your subordinates fairly yet treat you and your fellow supervisors as though we are expendable.

Governor Newsom knows that state legislators want this bill to pass, as it will save the state money in the long term, but he has previously followed CalHR's stance by vetoing the bill every year. This year, SB 76 has gone through both legislative houses, received 100% "yes" votes by the state's elected officials and was sent to Governor Newsom's office to be signed into law. Unfortunately, on October 7, Governor Newsom vetoed SB 76 at the last hour, using language clearly drafted by CalHR. CCSO lobbyists are exploring the possibility of submitting the bill to the Hoover Committee.

The excluded and exempt employee organizations are simply asking the state of California to treat supervisors in a fair and reasonable manner. CCSO will not stand for this injustice and has worked tirelessly to bring this unfair labor practice to the forefront. CCSO is committed to protecting our members' rights, and we will never give up the fight until supervisors are granted arbitration rights. Until all excluded and exempt employees are granted arbitration rights, the state of California will continue to waste millions of taxpayer dollars. CCSO will not back down and will continue to force the state to litigate these issues in Superior Court until we receive arbitration rights. 🗝️

ATTENTION

All Retirees

Are you retired, or are you looking to retire in a few years? Consider joining CCSO as a retired member.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

YOU DESERVE A STRESS-FREE LIFE



**Laura M. Hernandez,
Ph.D.**

I'm a psychologist. I'm supposed to have all the answers to life's mental and emotional struggles. My education and training were excellent, so I can't blame my alma mater or my supervisors ... and yet, I must humbly admit to you, I found myself at the end of my career realizing how poorly I managed my stress over the 28 years I worked for CDCR.

Probably like you, I started off with enthusiasm, thrilled to land a well-paying job with the state, which came with so many great benefits and opportunities to advance. I didn't keep track of when I started to change. I didn't even notice. My mom said I was starting to sound "cynical" by the end of my first year. I ignored her, as we do everyone who doesn't understand what it's like to work in a prison.

I thought I was managing the stress fairly well, though wine was starting to sound good every night, and I would spend most

evenings in a vegetative state in front of the TV trying to forget the day. I looked forward to my RDOs, but in time, they didn't leave me feeling as rested and ready to tackle the next work week. So, I focused on my vacations, but over the years, they too stopped having any lasting effect.

I tried the typical stress-reducing strategies we all hear. "Exercise!" "Eat well and get a good night's sleep!" "Try meditation!" "Do yoga!" Blah blah blah. Yes, that's all good advice, but it is not enough for many of us to overcome the day-to-day negative, if not toxic, environment of working in a prison. It's an environment that potentially drains you of optimism and enthusiasm, replacing such feelings with some combination of frustration, stress, anger, numbness, burnout and exhaustion. For some, these changes are obvious and noticed every day. For others, like me, they spend many years as a quiet undercurrent in life, creating a slow but steady drain.

Even as a psychologist, I didn't think there was much of an alternative. I knew I took on a stressful career and I owned the consequences of that choice — working for CDCR meant sacrificing joy for a benefits package. So, I adopted the mindset that I just needed to white-knuckle it to the prized retirement date looming in the distance. I made it to that date six months ago, but as I look back, I realize how little I was "living" during


the years it took to get there. Retirement is wonderful, but sadly, you and I have a short life expectancy after retirement. So, isn't it a shame many of us spend decades simply waiting to retire our way out of the constant stress, frustration, fatigue, etc.?

During the last year of my career, Rick Field approached me about a vision he had to develop a new type of employee wellness program. A program that does more than peer-to-peer mentoring and can actually teach techniques to improve your life by giving you the knowledge to manage your stress and emotions. In Rick's research, he stumbled upon the work being done by the HeartMath Institute. At first, it sounded like another reinvention of meditation or breathing techniques. I was skeptical. I have since been through HeartMath training, and this skeptic can tell you without hesitation that HeartMath techniques are a game-changer for people in our professions. The HeartMath Institute has provided training to many police agencies with an emphasis on stress-reduction strategies, which focus on building resilience and managing your emotions during a law enforcement career. The techniques are easy to learn, and just take some committed practice to become part of your natural daily routine. Once learned and practiced, the positive effects will be noticeable to you, your co-workers and your family. If practiced routinely, you will reap the benefits of improved mental clarity, better sleep, less stress and hopefully a longer life span. Had these techniques been widely taught 30 years ago, I could have better managed the stress of a CDCR career and actually enjoyed life a lot more along the way.

Rick Field's vision has become the Guardians employee wellness program, and I am honored to be a part of Guardians. Through the support of CCSO/CCSF, Guardians hopes to mentor staff members in ways that help them thrive in their careers. Along with providing mentors who have "walked in your shoes" and who can help you navigate your correctional career as well as life's challenges, Guardians will teach you HeartMath stress-reduction strategies to increase your overall well-being while helping you live a longer, happier life.



There truly is an alternative to holding your breath and counting the days to retirement.

To learn more about the Guardians mentoring and wellness program, please email us at Guardians@ccsfnet.org 



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CLIENT TESTIMONIALS: J.R. OVIEDO LAW GROUP

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he J.R. Oviedo Law Group continues to excel for CCSO and our members. Oviedo has a phenomenal track record and always strives for the best outcome for each client.

Below is feedback Oviedo and his team have received.

"J.R. Oviedo is an excellent attorney. His law group has represented me in an aggressive manner. I don't know what I would have done without their representation. Every time I reached out to the group, they were quick to respond. J.R. has represented me on this case for about a year, and he treats me like I am his only client. I know that he has my best interests in mind."


"I hold the utmost respect for J.R. Oviedo. He gave me straightforward answers to all my questions during my investigation and court proceedings. I felt a great weight lifted off my shoulders when he represented me during my trial because J.R. made sure my side was heard. His skill in the courtroom is very impressive. I highly recommend J.R. to anyone who needs an attorney."

"I appreciated the fact that you were so responsive and present when I needed you the most. You provided straightforward, knowledgeable, supportive advice that got me through one of the most difficult career challenges I have ever been subjected to. I have great respect and appreciation for your discipline, integrity, knowledge and commitment to your clients."

"J.R. represented me when I was wrongfully terminated from state service. J.R. informed me from the very beginning that it was going to take 18 to 24 months to get my job back, and he was right. J.R. fought hard for me and kept me informed on the process and what his attack was going to be against the state. I would highly recommend J.R."

"Attorney J.R. Oviedo has been an invaluable resource



for my family and employer. His service is impeccable, and his legal expertise is beyond reproach. The J.R. Oviedo Law Group provides a multitude of legal services and representation. The J.R. Oviedo Law Group is the best and only choice for you and your family!" 



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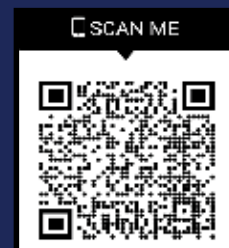
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