



California Correctional
Peace Officers Association

Front Street



Fronting the Facts, Watching Your Back

August 2003

Taking the fight from CYA Facilities to the Capitol

Message From Louie

*Vice President CYA
Rank and File*

CYA Director Jerry Harper must think he's pretty clever or believe for some reason that he can outlast CCPOA; that somehow we will give up before he gives in. Reality is that he apparently underestimates the resolve of this union and its unwillingness to compromise when it comes to the safety and working conditions of its members.

CCPOA has been crystal clear in terms of sending a message to Director Harper. More than 60 members from across California picketed at Nelles; CYA Chapter Presidents have told him personally of the increased assaults and decreased ward accountability. Simply stated, never in the history of the Youth Authority have conditions been more dangerous for Unit 6 public servants.

We've tried to communicate with him in his office and at his facilities. Now we've taken the battle on behalf of CCPOA members to another level – the State Capitol.

Members of the Legislature understand how hard you work and value the fact that, everyday, Unit 6 members put themselves out on the toughest beat in the state. Working together, CCPOA members protect the people from those who would perpetrate the most violent of crimes. As you'll see in this issue of Front Street, legislators are starting to ask Director Harper some tough questions...questions to which it appears he has no answers.

Now, the Director will be forced to listen and respond to our concerns. It should never have reached this point, but now that it has, CCPOA intends to hold Director Harper accountable for his CYA policies that have contributed to a working environment where staff are sexually harassed, assaulted and "gassed" on the job.

Our true purpose is fighting to protect Unit 6 members. As we converge on Reno for CCPOA's Annual Convention, we should never lose sight of what we stand for and the importance of our mission. CCPOA is a family, and we always take care of our brothers and sisters. I look forward to seeing you all and thank you for all that you do to bring honor to your profession and our great state.



CCPOA CYA Vice President Louie Adame questions CYA Director Jerry Harper's failed policies at the State Capitol

CYA DIRECTOR JERRY HARPER TAKEN TO THE MAT

Lack of Accountability and Leadership Questioned

On August 5th, the Select Committee on Prison Construction & Operations held a special hearing – initiated by CCPOA – regarding the operations at the Fred C. Nelles Youth Correctional Facility as well as other facilities across the state.

CCPOA has long demanded that California Youth Authority (CYA) Director Jerry Harper's lack of leadership and accountability has created an organization where wards have all the control and staff has none.

For more than two hours, CCPOA CYA Vice President Louie Adame and Nelles Chapter President Jerry Zamudio, faced Director Harper and outlined his systematic destruction of the Department.

During the hearing, Adame and Zamudio discussed the more than 100 incidents from June 23 until July 10 at Nelles and demanded answers to why criminal acts have steadily increased while ward populations have plummeted. Adame and Zamudio also expressed frustration over problems at the Nixon building, staff assaults, DDMS and sexual harassment.

"The Youth Authority and its Director's inability to correct our severe problems at Nelles have forced CCPOA to seek relief," CCPOA leadership stated in a memorandum to the Committee. "We have made several attempts to address and resolve our concerns, but the response from the Department of the YA under the leadership of Jerry Harper has been inept."

CCPOA also met with Youth & Adult Correctional Agency (YACA) Undersecretary Peter Jensen on April 28, 2003, but never heard back from him regarding the issues discussed.

The Select Committee on Prison Construction & Operations Chair, Assemblyman Rudy Bermudez, questioned Director Harper's policies. Harper appeared uncomfortable and uninformed, consistently relying on staff to answer questions he should have known. CCPOA believes it is this type of behavior and attitude that has failed the wards, has failed the staff and has failed the system.

Assemblyman Bermudez, alarmed by the Director's lack of information, demanded that CYA report back to the Committee in 15 days and have a subsequent 60-day review to see if progress has been made. It appears that the Legislature is not happy with the Director or his failed policies.

"We are happy to see that the incompetence of Director Harper is being exposed," said Adame. "We are grateful for the Committee's recommendation and look forward to seeing results across the board."



Adame and Nelles Chapter President Jerry Zamudio present evidence of Harper's lack of leadership and accountability

For more than two hours, CCPOA CYA Vice President Louie Adame and Nelles Chapter President Jerry Zamudio, faced Director Harper and outlined his systematic destruction of the Department.

TOUGH QUESTIONS. NO ANSWERS.

Some questions asked of CYA Director Jerry Harper during the August 5th hearing of Select Committee on Prison Construction & Operations:

- ? Why has your office decided to reduce criminal penalties for inmates when statistics demonstrate an increase of ward crime inside the Youth Authority facilities?
- ? CYA implemented the closure of Taft and the reopening of Nixon, combining three programs into one building. Was the Department aware that Nelles' 270 building was not designed to house these types of inmates?
- ? Why hasn't the Department reopened the Taft lock-up unit knowing that the Nixon Building is unsafe?
- ? What actions has your Department taken to hold inmates accountable for destroying windows, cuffing ports, rooms and flooding?

NAVIGATING HISTORY

By Mike Jimenez
CCPOA President

Our state finds itself sitting squarely in the middle of history. As public servants, CCPOA members have questions regarding the recall election. What are the ramifications? What will happen to the Department of Corrections and the Youth Authority?

What will the results of October 7th mean to me as a peace officer?

These are questions your CCPOA Executive Committee has already considered. We've done our homework and are making sure that CCPOA remains at the forefront of public safety in America. These are times of uncertainty and excitement, and CCPOA is optimistic about the future.

First and foremost, we are all professionals; we have an important job to do and we will perform our duties to the very best of our abilities, regardless of how the election turns out. Furthermore, CCPOA is poised to adapt and adjust to the outcome of the recall election, and will protect our profession and Unit 6 members who honor the badge and keep our state safe.

Regardless of who is Governor, CCPOA will continue to fight for training and resources that allow members to perform their duties safely and efficiently. We will ensure that our contract is honored, and we will fiercely oppose all efforts by corporate profiteers to privatize public safety institutions.

There is a belief that times of uncertainty are also times of opportunity. CCPOA has strong bipartisan working relationships and respect from lawmakers on all sides of the political spectrum. We are able to work cooperatively with any leader that understands and values the work you do, because keeping Californians safe from dangerous criminals is not a partisan policy.

Our job is an American responsibility and a duty that each and every one of you performs with great skill and dedication. Never forget that.

CCPOA is part of the fabric that is California, and we thank you all for everything you do for your peers and this family. We look forward to talking to each of you personally here at the Annual Convention and standing shoulder to shoulder with you as we navigate history.

We've done our homework and are making sure that CCPOA remains at the forefront of public safety in America.



CCPOA Leadership and Chapter Presidents stand united to face challenges and make history

CCPOA SOUNDBITES

By Louie Adame

Refocus the Academy on Training

With the freeze on cadets and no future academy dates, CCPOA believes it is time to concentrate on using the academy to develop lesson plans and provide training for Unit 6 staff at institutions. Having worked with some of the staff at Preston, I know the academy has the ability to enhance our members' ability to perform their duties. This is just another example of how CCPOA believes, regardless of the state's economic conditions, public resources must be used efficiently and promote professionalism and integrity.

CCPOA Lawyers Protect Members' Rights at N.A. Chaderjian

In yet another example of the working conditions Unit 6 members must endure, the FBI has launched an investigation of allegations made by wards against staff at N.A. Chaderjian. CCPOA lawyers are on site and will ensure members are treated fairly and their rights protected. If only CYA Director Harper was as responsive to sexual harassment, violence and other crimes committed against staff by ward. ***More on this issue in our next edition.***

QUICK HITS — CCPOA LEADERS EXPOSE LACK OF LEADERSHIP BY STATE OFFICIALS:

"We are looking for reasonable information and leadership. We have members whose families are trying to plan their futures and they can't. Every month we go back to the state and they are not forthright with us. We are tired of hearing "I'll get back to you."

Daryl Lee
Chapter President, Ventura

"We have to pull teeth to even get negotiations (with the state). In the meantime, we are spoon fed piecemeal answers."

Ivan Walker
Chapter President, Karl Holton

"We have gone overboard to work with the state and to be fair. We are not getting the same treatment."

David C. Darchuk
Chapter President, N.A. Chaderjian

"The biggest frustration is that we come to the table in good faith to bargain, only to find inconsistencies on part of the state. It has been a time-consuming process that has given us nothing."

Greg Gurrola
President, Dewitt Nelson

CCPOA NEGOTIATING TEAM DEMANDS ANSWERS FROM STATE

Team fights to protect Unit 6 members

“We’re not sure about this...”

“We’ll have to check on that...”

“We need clarification on this...”

These are the responses CCPOA’s Negotiating Team has received for months from the State of California after demanding answers about the closures of California Youth Authority facilities Karl Holton and Fred C. Nelles, as well as the partial closure of the Ventura facility.

For months, CCPOA’s Negotiating Team has demanded answers from the state about important issues that affect the lives of members. The state has fumbled, bungled and avoided providing simple answers. It appears there is a serious lack of leadership, which undermines public confidence.

“I make myself available to all my members 24/7, and believe me, I get calls at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 in the morning asking what is going on,” said Karl Holton Chapter President Ivan Walker. “Since May, I haven’t been able to give them an answer and that aggravates me.”

CCPOA Leadership always keeps the lines of communication open to their members and consistently provides the guidance and support they need to get their jobs done. Unfortunately, the state does not pay the same courtesy to CCPOA. Their blatant lack of concern for peace officers is astonishing.

When CCPOA’s Negotiating Team comes to the table, their driving motivation is to deliver the best possible results for members who protect Californians from hardened and dangerous criminals. CCPOA has been more than willing to work with the state, offering numerous cost-effective suggestions and plans on how to resolve important issues, yet CCPOA continues to get the runaround.

CCPOA Members Participate in the Negotiations Process:

- Ivan Walker** – Karl Holton
- Sharon LaMar** – NYCRCC
- Daryl Lee** – Ventura
- Dave Fee** – Preston
- Patti Padmore** – OHClose
- Greg Gurrola** – DeWitt Nelson
- Dave Dachuck** – Chaderjian
- Paul Hess** – Karl Holton
- Dennis Dent** – Karl Holton
- Fernando Zapien** – Karl Holton
- Corey Davis** – CCPOA Field Representative
- Stephen Walker** – SYCRCC



CCPOA goes toe to toe with state negotiators, demanding answers

“The state has dragged its feet in getting correct information in a decent time frame,” said Fernando Zapien, Karl Holton YCC. “Their famous phrase is ‘We’ll have to check into that.’”

While admittedly frustrating, these delays have only strengthened the determination of CCPOA leadership to protect its members. While state officials may be unsure, CCPOA is rock solid in its resolve to protect members.

“Despite the obstacles we have met so far, we are committed to working through this situation,” said CCPOA CYA Vice President Louie Adame. “We will not settle for anything less than a solution that is fair and respectable to our members.”



California Correctional Peace Officers Association

NO CONFIDENCE IN JERRY HARPER

An official resolution of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association

WHEREAS the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) has a duty and obligation to the people of the great state of California to carry out the mission of the California Youth Authority (CYA) and honor the profession; and,

WHEREAS CCPOA members have tried diligently to forge a cooperative and effective partnership with CYA Director Jerry Harper that serves the agency, helps reform wards and protect the public; and,

WHEREAS CCPOA has invested countless hours and participated in numerous direct meetings with Director Harper, communicating in great detail the need for training, support and leadership from CYA; and,

WHEREAS CCPOA has identified a variety of issues that, if not addressed, could expose Unit 6 members to increased danger of assault, harassment, "gassing" and other hazardous work conditions; and,

WHEREAS CCPOA has offered real and proven solutions including increased training, improved investigations and increased accountability for violent and destructive ward behavior; and,

WHEREAS despite CCPOA's efforts, Director Harper has failed to address any of these issues or enforce the Director's Decision Making System (DDMS) has created an environment where wards are not held accountable for dangerous behavior; and,

WHEREAS in institutions throughout California, CCPOA staff are forced to work in an increasingly dangerous atmosphere without the training and safety equipment to perform their duties safely, witnessing on a daily basis an increase in ward crime including assault, drug abuse, sexual harassment and hate crimes; and,

WHEREAS on Director Harper's watch, it has been reported to CCPOA that some investigators and managers routinely violate staff rights by engaging in unethical conduct including dishonesty, destroying evidence and demeaning staff; and,

WHEREAS CYA staff, with decades of experience, state that the Department is in the worst shape in its history due to the lack of leadership, vision and accountability, and many believe the current situation is directly attributable to Director Jerry Harper and some members of his inexperienced management team.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF CCPOA, HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN JERRY HARPER AS DIRECTOR OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF THE YOUTH AUTHORITY AND ENDORSE HIS IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM THE POSITION.

ACCORDINGLY, FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT CCPOA:

- Will never tolerate line officers being violently assaulted and harassed and will work to hold wards accountable for their actions when they "gas" or commit sexual assault; sexually harass staff; destroy state property or commit any crimes; and,
- Will not accept inadequate training and substandard safety equipment, no matter what the excuse, and will work tirelessly to secure the training that is necessary for staff to handle increasingly explosive juvenile behavior that threatens security within institutions and prevents wards from being rehabilitated; and,
- Will continue to do all in our power to force investigators to comply with the Peace Officer Bill of Rights and pledge to continue to fight for those who are wrongfully terminated; and,
- Will work tirelessly to remove any and all obstacles that stand in the way of safety, security and efficiency of operations at the Department of Youth Authority.

If Harper and some of his team members won't do the job, we the undersigned CCPOA members who believe in California and are committed to its people will.

Be sure to sign this resolution at the convention!