



Statement issued by Riverside County Executive Officer Jeff Van Wagenen:

Without exception, the focus of the County of Riverside is on improving the lives of those we serve. We are committed to protecting the safety, health and welfare of the most vulnerable in our community, and to safeguard them from harm and exploitation. While our dedicated staff work tirelessly every day to accomplish that mission, there have been instances in which those we seek to protect have been harmed.

With full support from the Board of Supervisors, my office is working with new leadership within the County to build on efforts to progressively transform the County's child welfare and dependent adult systems. Steps already taken by County staff in the last 18 months include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced caseloads by increasing the number of staff, resulting in improved quality and timeliness of casework.
- Improved training to align responsibilities, clarify policies, and implement new processes.
- Funded an integrated services delivery model to improve coordination and collaboration across multiple departments that provide safety net services.
- Established quality control and auditing units to conduct continuous review and provide real-time critical analysis and response.
- Partnered with well-respected community organizations to improve internal systems for better outcomes.

Our commitment to improve the system is evidenced by the work we've done so far. While there have been significant changes, more remains to be done.

Specifically, as it relates to the recent allegations regarding the care, services and placement provided to the 13 Turpin siblings by Riverside County departments, the County Executive Office engaged Larson LLP, a law firm led by former U.S. District Judge Stephen G. Larson, to conduct an independent and comprehensive investigation.

This independent inquiry has two objectives: 1) analyze the services provided to the six minor children and seven adult children; and, 2) assess the quality of care provided. In addition, the examination will review the various departmental programs to assess the level of care, attention, and services provided to children and dependent adults under the programs' care and supervision. The inquiry will culminate in a comprehensive report from Larson LLP, with recommendations to the County by March 31, 2022. This will serve as the foundation for action to implement policy and program reforms within Riverside County, as necessary.

The County of Riverside is committed to conducting a thorough and transparent review of the services provided to the Turpin siblings and to improve and strengthen the County's child welfare and dependent adult systems.

Biographies:

Stephen G. Larson, a partner with Larson LLP, served nearly 10 years as a federal judge, first as a United States Magistrate Judge and then as a United States District Judge, and is nationally recognized for his jurisprudence and legal acumen. His experience includes appointment by the Orange County Board of Supervisors to monitor the Orange County District Attorney's office compliance with a Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations regarding a jail informant scandal that made national headlines. Mr. Larson served as the Chair of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Safety, and he was selected to represent the victims of the 2015 San Bernardino terrorist attack. He was a founding member of the U.S. State Department's Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan.

Hillary Potashner, a partner with Larson LLP, served as the Federal Defender for the Central District of California for five years, having been twice appointed to that position by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. In addition to other appointments, Ms. Potashner is a current board member and past president of the Federal Bar Association of Los Angeles. Amongst attorneys and judges, she has developed a reputation for excellence and professionalism.