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### **Hiring Process at LAXPD Usurped: Vacancies Filled by Inexperienced Outside Candidates**

LOS ANGELES — For the last seven months and one year, respectively, there have been two vacant assistant chief positions at the Los Angeles Airport Police Division (LAXPD), which are required to be filled by someone from within the agency. However, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) usurped this process at a recent City Council meeting by requesting an exemption to hire from outside the LAXPD for the two positions, and the Council approved the request.

“This action is not only disappointing, but also jeopardizes safety at LAX and neglects and impedes the potential of LAXPD officers,” said Marshall McClain, president of LAAPOA. “LAAPOA appreciates the efforts of Councilmember Paul Koretz, who stood up for the men and women of the LAXPD and sought to deny this request and to have these vacancies filled from within the airport police ranks. Our police officers must be afforded the opportunity for internal advancement and promotions, which will ultimately improve safety, security and morale. Organizational decisions should be made by employees who have institutional knowledge of the Department and a real, vested interest in what happens, unlike those who’ve passed through our agency who weren’t engaged or qualified to begin with and were merely interested in achieving a secondary retirement payout.”

Over the last decade, LAWA has had the opportunity to fill the top three executive law enforcement positions — assistant airport police chief, chief of airport police and deputy director of aviation security services — a total of 19 times. Out of the 19 times these three positions have been staffed, in only *one* instance was the position permanently filled by an internal LAXPD candidate.

Two LAXPD captains have law degrees, two hold master’s degrees and the rest have bachelor’s degrees; all of them have been with the LAXPD for over 25 years and are more than qualified for the assistant chief positions. However, LAWA has again ignored capable LAXPD applicants in favor of bringing aboard two more individuals from outside our police force — this week, LAWA announced the hiring of Fountain Valley Police Department Chief Dan Llorens and Riverside Police Department Deputy Chief John Wallace to assume the two open assistant chief positions.

“While LAAPOA looks forward to working with Chief Llorens and Deputy Chief Wallace to make our airports safer, we cannot overlook that fact that highly accomplished internal LAXPD candidates were passed over for individuals who oversaw forces a fraction the size of ours,” said McClain. “Chief Llorens comes from a police department with only 58 total sworn officers, and Deputy Chief Wallace is also from a much smaller agency than the LAXPD — how can their experience even compare to our internal applicants who have a longstanding history of supervising a force of over 500 total sworn officers? Given the real and evolving threats faced by our airports, we must ensure we have the best leadership in place for our Department. Senior-level vacancies have been, and continue to be, staffed

with individuals from outside our organization who have been less qualified and/or came from much smaller police forces than ours, which has caused our agency to become stagnant with detrimental leadership decisions. This can no longer continue.”

McClain concluded, “To quote a member of LAAPOA’s Board of Directors, whose daughter is currently enrolled in the elite U.S. Army Military Academy at West Point: ‘Mayor Garcetti, when my daughter told me she wanted to be chief of airport police one day, the only advice I could give her was to work at another police agency first — you’ll have a better chance.’”

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*The Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers’ Association (LAAPOA) represents the sworn police officers and firefighters of the Los Angeles Airport Police Department assigned to protect and serve Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), LA/Ontario International Airport (ONT) and Van Nuys Airport (VNY). For more information on LAAPOA, please visit [www.laapoa.com](http://www.laapoa.com).*

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