



CHAMBER
of
COMMERCE

Via Email Only

January 28, 2021

Honorable George Gascon
Los Angeles County District Attorney
211 West Temple Street, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Special Directive 20-07 Regarding Non-Prosecution of Certain Misdemeanors

Dear District Attorney Gascon:

The Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce writes to you to express our concerns over your Special Directive 20-07 issued in December. The Directive instructs your staff not to prosecute certain misdemeanors, including crimes such as Trespass – Penal Code § 602(a)-(y), Disturbing The Peace – Penal Code § 415(1)-(3), Criminal Threats – Penal Code § 422, and Resisting Arrest – Penal Code § 148(a).

Businesses in our area have seen a steady stream of crime, including break-ins and robberies. One of the major concerns of our community is that criminals believe they can commit certain crimes with impunity. For example, criminals may believe they can engage in theft under a certain dollar value, ensuring that they are not considered serious crimes and will not result in jail time or serious consequences under our current criminal justice system.

Our Chamber is very concerned that your latest policy directive will exacerbate this serious problem and increase criminal activity in our area. For instance, criminals will be emboldened to trespass and engage in serious offenses such as criminal threats, knowing your office will not prosecute these offenses.

Our society relies in large part on the concept of deterrence – that the threat of punishment will deter people from committing crimes against the law abiding. When this concept is undermined, people and businesses are threatened and their ability to operate and plan within a secure environment is challenged. As a result, your Directive can result in harm to law abiding businesses and even discourage economic development. We respectfully ask that you consider the impact of your policy on the fate of these workers and companies.

Given the above, we again express our concern about this Directive and would like to engage in dialogue about a path forward to ensure a secure environment for our business community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd Johnson
President and CEO
Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce

CC: City of Beverly Hills; Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; California Chamber of Commerce; Los Angeles County Business Federation