

## CTCAV NEWSLETTER CONTENT and FORMAT

**CTC Newsletter Send Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 (to Webteam 1/26)**

**Subject Line: CTC January Newsletter**

Opening



Welcome to the first Cancel the Contract Newsletter of 2024! We hope you took time to rest, rejuvenate, and restore for this new year.

Take a moment to catch up on some important updates. We're sharing news about the LASD murder of Niani Finlayson, our recent presentation to the LA County Commission on Children and Families, a new trial date for the AVUHSD Discipline Discrimination Lawsuit, and upcoming events on our calendar.

Your support means the world to us as we navigate these matters together. Stay informed, stay engaged, and let's continue making a positive impact as a united community.

Highlights from Recent Events

Cancel the Contract proudly joined hands with the WOW Flower Project to spotlight the achievements and contributions of extraordinary youth in our community for WOW's annual Kwanzaa Awards. Nominated by their families, these young individuals have demonstrated remarkable overachievements and made significant positive impacts on both their families and the broader community.



The Kwanzaa celebration served as a platform to highlight the seven principles of Kwanzaa – Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith. Through engaging activities and presentations, we celebrated not only the rich cultural heritage of Kwanzaa but also the embodiment of these principles in the lives of our outstanding youth.



Criminal Justice Accountability

CTC staff spent the holidays supporting the family of Niani Finlayson, after her brutal and senseless murder on December 43th by LA County Sheriff Deputy Ty Shelton. The very same Deputy Shelton who murdered Elder Michael Thomas in 2020, also seconds after entering a home for a domestic violence call.



On January 11, 2024 CTC and partners held a press conference with Niani's family and attorneys to expose Niani's murderer, Deputy Ty Shelton's gang affiliations, and call for his immediate firing, along with his full prosecution by the District Attorney's Office.



The community expressed its outrage that LASD Deputy Ty Shelton was not only put back on the force, but was recently promoted to Training Officer, after he killed elder Michael Thomas in 2020. Shelton comes from a long lineage of LASD personnel, with family members serving from lieutenants to captains.



Shelton is also rumored to have ties to deputy gangs, and before he killed Thomas he was already on the "Sheriff's 11," which is believed to be an internal watchlist for problematic deputies. After Shelton's brief 3 month suspension for murdering Thomas, it is believed that he had over two dozen "Use of Force" incidents in the short 8 months since he returned. We

continue with our 5 Demands from County and Federal Governments:

1. LASD release of the full length unedited body cam footage from ALL deputies on scene, including after the murder.
2. LA Sheriff Robert Luna to fire Ty Shelton immediately.
3. District Attorney's Office prosecute Ty Shelton to the fullest extent of the law.
4. LA County BOS and LASD comply with the 2015 Antelope Valley [Settlement Agreement](#).
5. DOJ must conduct an independent investigation of Niani's murder.

And please donate to [Niani's GoFundMe](#) to help her parents cover the funeral costs.

### **Lancaster deputy involved in WinCo incident arrested after domestic violence allegation**

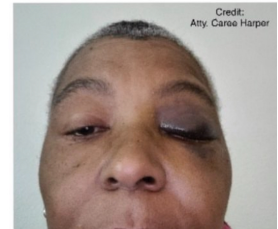
Speaking of "bad apples" or more aptly put "evil and corrupt deputies who want to harm Black folks," our very own Lancaster Deputy Trevor Kirk was in Santa Clarita Court for domestic violence charges last week. [As the LA Times reported](#), "Seven months after he was caught on camera throwing a Black woman to the ground during a controversial [use-of-force incident in a WinCo parking lot](#), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Trevor Kirk was arrested last week for alleged domestic battery."

We ask Sheriff Luna, "Is this your idea of good and professional law enforcement conduct?" "Do you think our community feels safe with these types of deputies roaming around?"

## Lancaster deputy involved in WinCo incident arrested after domestic violence allegation



Deputy Trevor Kirk in December. (Caree Harper)



## COC Deputy Gang Hearing

In our ongoing efforts to hold law enforcement accountable, we attended the recent COC (Civilian Oversight Commission) Meeting and hearing for Ex-Sheriff Alex Villanueva. The session provided valuable insights into the challenges we face in reforming the system.



### Meeting Highlights

1. **Arrogance in Responses:** During the hearing, Ex-Sheriff Villanueva displayed a concerning level of arrogance in responding to questions from the commission and legal representatives. This behavior raises serious questions about his commitment to transparency and accountability.
2. **Denial of Deputy Gangs:** Despite mounting evidence and community concerns, Sheriff Villanueva continued to deny the existence of deputy gangs within the department. This denial raises doubts about his willingness to address systemic issues and protect the rights of the community.
3. **Refusal to Investigate Deputies with Tattoos:** Sheriff Villanueva's statement about not conducting investigations on deputies with tattoos is alarming. It brings into question the department's commitment to addressing potential misconduct and ensuring the public's trust in law enforcement.



### Our Response:

As advocates for justice and accountability, Coalition Cancel The Contract remains steadfast in our mission

to address systemic issues within law enforcement. The revelations from the COC Meeting underscore the importance of our work in holding officials accountable for their actions and ensuring transparency in the face of public concerns.

### **LASD Meet the Captains Meeting**



Recently, our team had the opportunity to attend the "Meet The Captains" meeting in Palmdale, CA, where we engaged with the captains of both the Palmdale and Lancaster Sheriff Stations. Our team engaged in open and candid discussions with the captains, addressing concerns

The sheriffs expressed their commitment to fostering trust and transparency with the community whoever not substantial plans are in place to be able to account for these efforts they are claiming to be making.

While the stations are attempting to bridge the gap, it is crucial to acknowledge that trust and partnership cannot be established as long as instances of reckless use of force continue, leading to the tragic loss of lives within our community.

### Education Justice

### **AVUHSD Discrimination Lawsuit**



In May 2023, Cancel the Contract, as the community plaintiff, [filed a lawsuit against the Antelope Valley Union High School District](#) for its discrimination in discipline against Black

students and students with disabilities. You can read the 2-page [Lawsuit Explainer](#) here. To date, the AVUHSD has been unwilling to change its ways, so **WE ARE GOING TO COURT!**

The trial is scheduled to begin Friday March 15, 2024 at the Los Angeles Superior Court. Please follow us on our IG for court updates. Cancel the Contract is looking forward to making the systemic change that is longer overdue in the AVUHSD, and that will go a long way in holding the District accountable for its discriminatory actions towards its most vulnerable students.

### Educational Law Workshop 1/31/24



Cancel the Contract and our Education Rights partner Neighborhood Legal Services invites the community to join us Wednesday January 31 at 6:30pm for an Educational Law Workshop. We will be presenting a self-advocacy curriculum on rights a student has if their school is trying to push them out of the classroom via a suspension. We will have a slide presentation followed by interactive practice of possible scenarios.

[Register In Person Presentation](#)

[Register Virtual Presentation](#)

### Alex Vitale Event 2/19/24



Noted author Professor Alex Vitale will be returning to the Antelope Valley in February. Professor Vitale teaches Sociology at Brooklyn College and is the Coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College. He is an expert on issues of over-policing in community and in schools. Professor Alex is collaborating with Cancel the Contract to develop a report on alternatives to police in school. Professor Vitale is looking forward to meeting with parents and students to discuss their experiences with school police. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for an event registration link in the near future.

### **LA County Commission on Children and Families**



On January 22, 2024, the CTC Team traveled down to LA to make a special presentation on the impact of SRDs in schools to the LA County Commission of Children & Families. The Commissioners had a working knowledge of the harm school police present to students, but had never heard the personal stories behind the data. They were visibly affected by what they heard



and clearly understood that as a county body that focuses on the welfare of children, they needed to bring the full force of the Commission's influence to address the issue. The Commission stated that they would be sending a letter to the Board of Supervisors urging them to take action.

### **AVUHSD Board Meeting December 14, 2023, 6:30 pm**

Please join with CTC to provide public comment to the Board about issues facing our students. Subjects can include the need to invest in a new safety model that doesn't rely on Law Enforcement, the District's failure to provide total student wellness that fosters a sense of community school pride for ALL its students, and the over policing and discipline discrimination AVUHSD's Black students and students with disabilities face on a daily basis. The Board of Trustees continues to be disingenuous to parents and students about how wonderful the schools are. Cancel the Contract understands this is not the case for its most vulnerable students and will continue to advocate for students at every board meeting.

**Meeting Location: A.V.U.H.S.D. Boardroom, 176 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535**

### **Los Angeles Board of Supervisors Meeting 12/19/24**

On Tuesday December 19, the Board of Supervisors passed the [Creating an Independent Process for Complaints Related to School Law Enforcement Services](#) motion by a vote of 5-0. This was a win for student safety as it codified a School Resource Deputy complaint system separate and independent from LASD. Cancel the Contract worked closely with the motion's author in crafting the motion's language that would afford the most protection for our students against the harm to Black and Latinx students that is perpetrated by the presence of school police. We also organized other youth based organizations to support the motion, created a form letter of support for our coalition members to send to all five Supervisors, and gave written and public comments to the Board of Supervisors. As CTC works to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline with the removal of School Resource Deputies, we will continue to advocate for legislation that mitigates the harm done to students by SRDs.

Meet the Team: Mia Kei



You've surely been seeing her captivating and informing videos on social media breaking down what's going on with the police in our community, please meet CTC Media Assistant Mia Kei. Mia graduated from Gorman Charter, and is currently a sophomore student at AVC, where she is studying Biophysics. Mia joined CTC in December 2023 and she has been supporting on social media and videography.

**Upcoming Meeting:**

The next CTC Coalition Meeting Monday February 26, 2024 at our office.

[Register Here](#)

Closing Section

Please share this newsletter with your networks and follow us on socials. We hope to see you at an upcoming event, and please reach out with any concerns.

Yours in CommUNITY,

The CTCAV Team