



IOLERO Director Statement on Alicia Roman

Recently, as director of IOLERO, I concluded that Alicia Roman's continued participation in our Community Advisory Council ("CAC") was in conflict with our mission, and she will no longer be working with the Office in that capacity. Pursuant to the CAC bylaws, as director of IOLERO, I may need to make decisions to remove a member from the CAC. I did not take my decision lightly, as I greatly admire and respect Ms. Roman for her hard work, intelligence, and commitment to the community, and her significant contributions to the recent work of the CAC on immigration policy recommendations. I made this decision only after much deliberation and communication with Ms. Roman. While this decision has been painful, and I am sorry to lose a CAC member who has contributed so much, it was necessary in order to maintain the Office's and CAC's integrity both in the community and with law enforcement.

Fundamentally, IOLERO is an office that is charged with bridging the gaps between law enforcement and the various communities of Sonoma County, including the Latinx community, while also ensuring that complaints against Sheriff's deputies are investigated in a manner that is objective and fair. This is not an easy mission, and requires that IOLERO act and be seen as independent and neutral, and committed to the truth, rather than to one side or another of a dispute. Consistent with IOLERO's purpose, the CAC is charged with bringing community feedback to IOLERO and the Sheriff, as well as objectively explaining the Sheriff's policies to community members. Additionally, the CAC bylaws, established by the CAC, state the purpose of the CAC is to serve as a bridge between law enforcement, IOLERO and various communities of the County. Furthermore, the CAC bylaws state the members must be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment, and that their conduct should not have a negative impact on the integrity of or the community's confidence in the CAC.

Ms. Roman was informed of the expectations of a CAC member. Unfortunately, as Ms. Roman worked in her official role as a CAC member, it became increasingly clear that her vision for that position was not consistent with the stated mission of IOLERO and with that of the CAC. Ms. Roman has been clear that she believes the onus for repairing community relations rests solely on the Sheriff's Office, with no role for community members. As a representative of IOLERO and the CAC, she has publicly urged community members ***not*** to work on building a relationship of trust with the Sheriff's Office, and has explained Sheriff's Office policies in ways that were not reasonably objective, but antagonistic to that Office and its employees. While these approaches may be entirely appropriate for a member of the public or an activist, and I do not deny her right to her opinion, they are not appropriate in a role as a representative of IOLERO and the CAC, and are counter-productive to their mission.

When advised of this concern, Ms. Roman pledged to nonetheless continue this approach as a member of the CAC. I therefore concluded that her service on the CAC was no longer advisable. In communicating this decision to Ms. Roman, I also committed to continue to work closely with her to ensure that her work and input as a member of the public would be fully included in the CAC process. I wish Ms. Roman the best and sincerely hope she will continue her involvement with the CAC as a member of the community.