

PIMA COUNTY DEPUTY'S ORGANIZATION

Pima County Deputy's Organization Vote of NO CONFIDENCE in Sheriff Chris Nanos

Members of the Pima County Deputy's Organization, which represents over half of all deputies in Pima County, has approved a vote of **NO CONFIDENCE** in Sheriff Chris Nanos. This vote was nearly unanimous at 98.8%.

This vote was called after years of frustration at the lack of competent leadership and mismanagement from Sheriff Nanos and his senior command. In February of 2023, we relayed to Sheriff Nanos, who cited low morale as a reason he ran for sheriff, a department morale poll of our members, which showed it to be near rock-bottom. Instead of working with us to improve things, Sheriff Nanos ignored these results and responded with his usual management method: retaliation to force silence.

Since Sheriff Nanos took office three years ago, the Pima County Jail, once a model for other counties to emulate, is now one of the deadliest jails in the country. He fired and chased away so many Corrections Officers that deputies were routinely taken off the streets on a nightly basis, for months, to backfill the hole he created. This further devolved into a mandatory overtime roster for deputies, most of whom were never trained to work in the jail, to work forced overtime there.

Recently a new procedure was enacted at the jail, where arrestees who simply say they have ingested fentanyl are medically rejected from the booking process. Naturally, word has quickly spread to Pima County's criminal class, and they now routinely use it as a "Get Out of Jail Free Card." The consequences of this are easy to see as you drive through Tucson and unincorporated Pima County.

Last year, one of our member deputies was sexually assaulted by her supervisor. When she became aware that her entire chain of command knew it was happening and failed to stop it, she requested an investigation into them, separate from the criminal case against the suspect. Sheriff Nanos personally stopped this investigation and then purposefully confused the public in statements, claiming it would negatively impact the criminal case. He even moved one of the accused senior commanders in the subsequent lawsuit to oversee Internal Affairs after the incident.

When the Pima County Board of Supervisors voted to request an outside agency come investigate the command misconduct, Sheriff Nanos responded by pulling their security detail at their meetings. This was the public's first look at Sheriff Nanos' retaliatory practice. He only relented when public opinion turned against him, but the embarrassment to our agency was already done. He is now being criminally investigated by the Arizona Attorney General's Office regarding his handling of the sexual assault.

There have been so many instances of dissident voices being retaliated against that would be difficult to catalogue. What is easy to see, however, is the effect it and the constant mismanagement has had on morale and our agency. Scores of veteran deputies, with hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of training have fled to other agencies for a better working environment.

Sheriff Nanos and his hand-picked team of senior commanders have created a toxic culture of incompetence and retaliation. Day by day it weakens our beloved agency and undermines our ability to serve our community in an effective manner. We at the Pima County Deputy's Organization hope this vote serves as a wake-up call to the department and public that drastic change at the highest levels is desperately needed.

Until that happens, experienced deputies will continue to leave, criminals will continue to roam our streets, the public will continue to be underserved and inmates under our care will continue to be at risk.