Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I am writing as President of the Castro Valley Democratic Club to urge that you adopt strong independent Sheriff Oversight. We are proud that our Supervisor for District 4, Nate Miley, last year started the process to enact Sheriff Oversight. It's past time to get this done and done right. The County needs this even with the election of a new reform Sheriff who has made clear she supports independent oversight.

AB 1185 legislation provides for subpoena powers that must be unhindered. Strong oversight cannot interfere with the power of the Sheriff but it must be free to conduct investigations and develop substantive recommendations for necessary change to the Board of Supervisors. Oversight for Alameda County must include:

* A volunteer oversight board with subpoena power, composed of qualified community members representative of our county’s diversity and working in cooperation with a paid, professional inspector general.
* Any oversight body must have diverse and inclusive representation - a community selection panel appointed by the Supervisors to proactively reach out for applicants among county residents can best achieve this critical goal.
* Dedicated funding is essential for an oversight body that must make periodic reports to the public and the Board to address issues of community concern.
* **Most importantly**, an oversight body must have independent legal counsel not appointed, overseen, or contracted by the County Counsel. As you know, the County Counsel is required by law to represent the Sheriff in any litigation. In the event, litigation is necessary to enforce subpoena oversight becomes ineffective without legal counsel completely independent of the County Counsel representing the Sheriff's Office.

We are so pleased that the voters of Alameda County chose to elect Yesenia Sanchez as our new Sheriff. We hope that each of you will act now to ensure that regardless of who is the elected Sheriff there will be full independent oversight of the Sheriff. We will consider anything less a meaningless gesture not worthy of our support.

Sincerely,

Mary Swain, President Castro Valley Democratic Club