

CALIFORNIA RACIAL AND IDENTITY PROFILING ADVISORY BOARD (BOARD)
<https://oag.ca.gov/ab953/board>

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

June 23, 2026, 10:09 a.m. – 2:05 p.m.

Members Present: Co-Chair DJ Criner and Members William Armaline, LaWanda Hawkins, Jordan Rall, Angela Sierra, and Chauncey Smith

Members Absent: None

1. CALL TO ORDER BY SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Co-Chair DJ Criner called the meeting of the Accountability & Civilian Complaints Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to order.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Each Subcommittee member introduced themselves.

3. APPROVAL OF JUNE 23, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair Criner stated the Subcommittee had an opportunity to review the minutes from June 23, 2026, and asked whether there was a motion to approve the minutes. Member Armaline moved to approve the minutes, and Member Rall seconded. Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Martha Gomez of the California Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a roll-call vote:

- **AYE:** Co-Chair Criner and Members Armaline, Rall, and Sierra
- **NAY:** None
- **ABSTAIN:** None

The motion carried unanimously among those present.

4. ELECTION OF NEW CO-CHAIR

Co-Chair Criner introduced the next item — the nomination and election of a new Subcommittee co-chair. He stated that Co-Chair Hawkins stepped down from this role, but would be continuing as a member of the Subcommittee.

Co-Chair Criner explained the process for electing a new co-chair, noting that they will call for nomination shortly, and any Subcommittee member can nominate a co-chair. Subcommittee members can also nominate themselves if they choose to serve as a co-chair. Nominations do not need to be seconded, but the approval of the nomination of the individual does need to be seconded once they get there. Once all nominations have been collected, they will vote on the nominees to figure out who they can nominate as the co-chair for this particular subcommittee.

Co-Chair Criner opened the floor for nominations.

Member Sierra nominated Member Smith. Co-Chair Criner asked Member Smith if he accepted the nomination, and clarified he was not being asked to accept the position, but the nomination. Member Smith thanked Member Sierra and accepted the nomination.

Co-Chair Criner asked if there were other nominations or if he could proceed to a motion to close the nominations. Member Armaline moved to close nominations, and Member Sierra seconded it. Co-Chair Criner noted the nomination on the floor for Member Smith to serve as

Co-Chair with Member Criner and asked DOJ staff to take roll call. DAG Gomez conducted the roll-call vote:

- **AYE:** Co-Chair Criner and Members Armaline, Rall, and Sierra
- **NAY:** None
- **ABSTAIN:** None

The motion carried unanimously among those present. Co-Chair Criner congratulated Member Smith.

Member Smith stated he was grateful for the opportunity to serve as a Board member and also now a co-chair of one of the subcommittees, and glad to continue his work with DOJ staff and other members of the committee.

Co-Chair Criner thanked Co-Chair Smith and noted he really appreciated it, it would be an honor to serve with him, and he cannot wait to see his leadership.

5. UPDATES BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DAGs Rebekah Fretz and Gomez provided an update on behalf of DOJ. They presented a roadmap of the draft Accountability and Civilian Complaints chapters of the 2027 RIPA Report for the Subcommittee to consider and discuss.

DAG Fretz began with a roadmap of the Civilian Complaints section. She reminded the Subcommittee that, in last year's Report, the Board expressed concern with the low number of reported sustained complaints and the desire to explore the cause for this low number in future reports. During the last Subcommittee meeting on March 24, 2026, the Subcommittee decided to take a closer look at law enforcement agencies' (LEAs) complaint investigation procedures to determine whether it could identify best practices for internal complaint investigations and for internal auditing of complaint investigations.

DAG Fretz explained that in the Civilian Complaints section of the 2027 RIPA Report, the draft first provides the annual analysis of complaint data reported by RIPA agencies as found on pages one to two of the draft. This section of the Complaints chapter will include an analysis of the 2025 civilian complaint data that DOJ has received from LEAs in California, including an overview of the complaint data, the disposition of those complaints, and a cross-year comparison. This section of the report is still under development but will be included in the next version of the Civilian Complaints draft.

DAG Fretz next stated that the Civilian Complaints chapter will include a section entitled "Law Enforcement Complaint Investigations," which starts on page two of the current draft. This section will include some examples of current California LEAs' policies and practices regarding complaint investigations, which are currently on page three of the draft. This content is also still in development and will be included in the next draft.

DAG Fretz then explained that this subsection of the report, on pages four to seven of the current draft, also discusses four general principles LEAs should consider and incorporate as they are developing their internal complaint investigation procedures. These general principles are that (1) the investigation should be independent of the unit of the officer or officers implicated in the complaint; (2) the investigation should be thorough and timely to ensure that the investigation is objective and fair and the disposition is appropriate; (3) the decision-making in the investigation should be transparent to establish, restore, or enhance public confidence in the complaint investigation process, and (4) there needs to be an internal accountability or auditing of the internal complaint process, preferably by an external independent body.

DAG Fretz then stated that the Civilian Complaints chapter, on pages seven to 15 of the draft, will then discuss best practices for internal complaint investigations, which are pulled from current research. This section also discusses the investigation process from intake to final disposition of complaints and provides best practices for each step. As noted in the current draft, the research demonstrates that LEAs' complaint intake should have clear, comprehensive, and non-discriminatory procedures for the filing of complaints. This topic was covered in other RIPA Reports, so DAG Fretz proposed that one question for the Subcommittee to consider today is whether it wants to include a section on intake or focus mainly on the investigation procedures and post investigation procedures such as auditing.

DAG Fretz explained next that the draft also discusses preliminary investigations and how LEAs should have procedures in place to ensure that serious complaints such as those alleging racial and identity profiling are not being dismissed or closed out before being fully investigated.

Next, DAG Fretz explained that the draft then discusses who in the LEA should investigate complaints to ensure that the investigation process is fair and objective and then discusses best practices for conducting complaint investigations, including best practices for conducting interviews, the proper documentation of investigations, and effective disposition and resolution of complaints. These areas are also currently under development.

DAG Fretz explained that the draft next discusses who in the LEA should investigate complaints to ensure that the investigation process is fair and objective. The draft includes best practices for conducting complaint investigations, including best practices for conducting interviews, the proper documentation of investigations, and effective disposition and resolution of complaints. These areas are also currently under development.

DAG Fretz then stated that DOJ has identified several topics that the Subcommittee could discuss during the meeting. First, the Subcommittee could discuss whether it wants to include the intake subsection in the draft on best practices for complaint investigations. This topic was discussed in past reports, and the Board could also touch on it as part of this year's theme of past, present, and future but put more emphasis on the complaint investigation process. Second, the Subcommittee could also discuss whether they have any recommendations regarding the disposition categories for complaints beyond the four required under California law. Third, the Subcommittee could discuss whether there are any other recommendations that the Board would like to include in this year's report in the Civilian Complaints section.

DAG Fretz also asked whether the Subcommittee wants to include a Vision for Future Reports subsection in the Civilian Complaints section to preview or explore anything further on this topic for next year's report.

DAG Fretz then turned DOJ presentation over to DAG Gomez to preview the Accountability section of the 2027 RIPA Report.

DAG Gomez noted she would discuss the draft Accountability research outline for the 2027 RIPA Report, which explores the role of internal auditing procedures within LEAs as applied to complaint investigations. The Accountability section is divided into six main sections, which she discussed briefly so that the Subcommittee has a roadmap of the section.

DAG Gomez first discussed that there is an introduction on page one of the draft research outline. Second, the draft contains a discussion of internal audits and their impact, found on pages one through five of the draft. This portion of the research outline discusses key definitional terms for the benefit of the Subcommittee and the public. As discussed in the outline, an internal audit is an independent, objective activity that evaluates and improves governance, risk management, and control systems.

DAG Gomez stated that this subsection of the research outline also discusses the benefits of internal audits as well, as potential consequences for LEAs that do not conduct internal audits.

Internal audits can identify areas for improvement, enhance transparency and accountability, reduce risk and liability, improve officer training and performance by identifying gaps in training, and can help an agency demonstrate its commitment to best practices. In contrast, as noted in the draft research outline, there are a number of potential drawbacks to LEAs not conducting internal audits, including that such LEAs may experience an erosion of public trust in their complaint processes and may even experience a decrease in officer morale.

DAG Gomez next discussed that section three of the research outline on pages five through 21 presents best practices for auditing the investigations of racial and identity profiling complaints. Much of these standards come from the Institute of Global Internal Audit Standards, which is used globally in the public and private sector, and from the government auditing standards issued by the Controller General of the United States. Although both standards are not specific to law enforcement, their principles are discussed and broadly applied to this context.

DAG Gomez then stated that, as noted in the research outline, DOJ has identified seven best practices for internal auditing of profiling complaint investigations, and they are as follows: (1) Independence or freedom from pressure that could compromise impartial judgment. Healthy internal auditing processes are those that have direct access to the senior oversight authority such as a city manager or a police commission and those that have personal independence to ensure that individual auditors remain unbiased; (2) Objectivity or the impartiality of fairness with which auditors perform their duties, Internal auditors must evaluate evidence and make judgements based solely on facts and established standards without allowing person interest, relationships, or external influence to affect their conclusion; (3) Internal audit processes should also have a clear organizational structure including the creation of a formal audit charter, a clear reporting line, and express authority and autonomy to assess all relevant material and autonomy to report on its findings. This guarantees the internal audits autonomy and audit in setting audit plans and performing their work without interference from management which safeguards the auditors from external pressures; (4) Top management support is vital for internal audit effectiveness. Without the commitment and active backing of leadership, it is difficult to ensure that audit recommendations are successfully implemented; (5) Internal auditing processes should have a code of ethics and maintain objectivity and independence in their work with a strong moral and professional framework for auditors' behavior; (6) Internal audit processes should also incorporate data systems, trend analysis, and early intervention to remain effective in the modern age, including the strategic integration of data analytics, artificial intelligence, automation to analyze large volumes of data with greater efficiency; and finally (7) Ongoing professional development to help auditors stay up-to-date with industry standards, regulatory changes, and emerging risk.

DAG Gomez then explained that section four of the research outline on pages 21 to 26 contains a chart of Waves 1 and 2 LEAs and describes whether they contain an internal audit unit and whether that unit evaluates the investigations into racial and identity profiling complaints.

DAG Gomez explained that in section five on page 26 and 27, DOJ has provided potential Board recommendations related to internal audits of the investigations into profiling complaints. DAG Gomez encouraged the Board to discuss these potential recommendations. First, the Board could recommend that to the extent possible, LEAs should conduct both internal and external audits of their responses to individual complaints, as well as to the complaint procedures overall and the investigations into those complaints. While LEAs can conduct their own internal audits, auditing may also be particularly valuable when conducted by an entity outside of the LEA.

DAG Gomez also proposed that the Board could recommend that LEAs should augment existing audit procedures or, where none exist, transition to proactive internal auditing frameworks that utilize integrity testing, independent review, and data-driven analysis to address the historically low rate of sustained profiling complaints, ensure investigative integrity, and build public trust.

DAG Gomez further suggested that, concurrently, the Board could recommend that academic and professional communities conduct deeper empirical research to identify exactly what constitutes an effective internal audit framework in policing.

DAG Gomez noted that there is an area for the Subcommittee's Vision for Future Reports on page 27, which is under development. DAG Gomez encouraged the Subcommittee's input about what they would like to see for next year's report and for upcoming reports.

DAG Gomez then turned the meeting back over to Co-Chair Criner for the Subcommittee to discuss the Report, but noted that there was going to be a scheduled break for accommodation purposes.

6. BOARD DISCUSSION OF PLANS FOR THE 2027 REPORT

After the break, DAG Gomez confirmed quorum. Member LaWanda Hawkins joined the meeting and noted that she was having problems with her camera.

Co-Chair Criner asked Members for comments or questions regarding the Accountability section of the 2027 RIPA Report.

Member Armaline stated it seems like the approach in the Accountability section is similar to what they did with civilian oversight boards. He stated it seems like a very similar approach where we demonstrate how they work, the best practices, and things like that. He noted all that seems great and looks good, including the research. Then he noted that it seems that they are taking a similar approach with Civilian Complaints in the prior report, and if that is the intention then it looks really good. Member Armaline stated that as to the first part of the Civilian Complaints section, he was trying to read through it as best he could when DOJ staff was presenting, but obviously he needs some more time with it.

He asked regarding the Subcommittee's concern from last year where they identified all these complaints but only a handful out of thousands were seen as legitimate. Member Armaline noted the draft contains a lot of research regarding the best practices to deal with these complaints. Then he asked whether LEAs feel like they are doing any real investigation into what happened. He noted those are two different things. It is one thing for an LEA to say this is the way we would like everybody to do this, but that was not his concern. He noted he was concerned that LEAs have a bunch of people who do not do great work and they need to find out what happened there. He asked whether LEAs were satisfied or whether they were doing what they are doing without accountability.

DAG Fretz asked Member Sierra whether she wanted to go first and then they could jump in and discuss. Member Sierra said yes and stated she had one comment on the complaints portion of the draft that is related to Member Armaline's points. Member Sierra stated there is a concern where there may be several reasons why the numbers of sustained complaints are low and they are trying to tease that out, here are some best practices. However, Sierra noted she thinks that part of why there is a problem with these numbers is how the four disposition categories are being interpreted or what LEAs are requiring for their burden of proof when they are looking at and investigating these complaints. Member Sierra stated that right now in their draft on page 15 of the Civilian Complaint draft they talked about how the disposition must be classified within one of the following categories: sustained, not sustained, exonerated, and unfounded. She further stated either they remind themselves from a prior report or they could bring that up higher and develop that more, like what do those terms really mean and is there a way to find out how those are being interpreted by a typical LEA? How much evidence is being required to sustain a complaint? Sierra noted the Subcommittee would have to brainstorm and think about how they find that out, what does it mean to be not sustained versus unfounded because she thinks there is a fair possibility that some of the issue lies in that versus the actual practices. Member Sierra stated how they investigate or how they look into how agencies on the ground really interpret

and applying these categories is a topic that maybe they can explore today. She stated that maybe there is some research on this.

Member Armaline thanked Member Sierra and noted that she articulated some specifics that he had not, and he found it really helpful. Member Armaline stated that the message that needs to be sent to all LEAs reporting RIPA data is if agencies think the Board is going to see a number like that and just let it go, they are mistaken. He stated that there are plenty of Members that are very highly trained in statistics and all of these kinds of things. Member Armaline stated that when you originally brought up this problem that is either the greatest statistical anomaly in the history of statistics or there is a big problem; it is one or the other; there is not a third option here in the reality of social science and data. Member Armaline stated that for the Subcommittee not to look like imbeciles, they need to have a very strong statement that says this is unacceptable. They do not know exactly what the problem is, but there is a problem. Member Armaline asked what they are doing in terms of research to find out what the problem is? Member Armaline said it is great to say this is how LEAs define terms, but if he were Sheriff X and felt like doing whatever he felt like doing and can just send the Board whatever data he felt like sending the Board, it does not matter what the words mean. Member Armaline said if he was a member of the public looking at this data and the board, this is what he would expect. Member Armaline asked to what extent are they able to deliver that.

Member Sierra again asked DOJ staff if they remember off the top of their head if the Board has already dealt with the categories issue. Member Sierra said one possibility is to see if any of the LEAs are willing to bring a representative and talk to them about what it takes to sustain a complaint. She asked whether it means that agencies need body worn camera evidence or what. She asked whether the bar is so high that it makes it almost impossible to get a complaint sustained in this context. Member Sierra noted that maybe there has been some research already done on this that they could use even if it is California or non-California that may be helpful.

Member Hawkins stated she supports a bill for LEAs to have some form of accountability when it comes to these numbers. If they do not, the community will not support and believe in the RIPA Board, and it creates a problem. Member Hawkins stated that they already have a problem with the community believing in data. Member Hawkins stated that when they have numbers like this, it really blows it out of perspective. She said it is very important that they as a committee get to the bottom of this and find out why these numbers were submitted like this and make sure that LEAs do not submit numbers like this again. Member Hawkins said LEAs cannot just submit numbers that are wrong; it makes the Board look bad. She said the Board needs to let LEAs know that they are holding them accountable, every LEA in the state. Member Hawkins stated LEAs need to straighten this matter out and hire people to put the numbers together; she said someone has to check LEA numbers before they are submitted, there is no excuse.

Member Armaline stated Member Hawkins brought up another issue that is of central concern to the committee and DOJ. Member Armaline stated one of their central concerns that they all shared long ago in this committee was to make sure the members of the public feel like they have the ability and the right to report on the activities of law enforcement, no matter what those happen to be. Member Armaline stated if he were a member of that public, he has a black wife and children, in actual real life, and he is looking at these numbers and he sees, well, everybody that makes a complaint to law enforcement does not get their complaint sustained. He said everybody takes the risk to put their name out and to go through the process, but he sees only three or four people or whatever get that sustain.

DAG Fretz thanked the committee and stated DOJ staff have taken note of all these suggestions, and they will look further into this issue. DAG Fretz stated that as Member Sierra mentioned, there can be numerous reasons for causing this low number of sustained complaints, whether it is dispositions and how agencies are categorizing them or procedures. As noted in the report, there is quite a bit of discretion under the law and how they implement their procedures. DAG Fretz

stated they will continue to do research and develop this report; they have talked to the Subcommittee and are talking to some experts as well about ways to go about looking into this further and are also looking into having some agencies speak to the Subcommittee to explain a little bit more about their processes and how they are processing, investigating these complaints and arriving at these dispositions. DAG Fretz stated DOJ staff will continue to develop the Civilian Complaints chapter.

Member Sierra stated she has one more thought, something to consider, to make it less abstract as part of their discussion and as they develop this along the lines of their conversation. She asked whether it would be helpful to have two hypothetical complaints that are more of a common type of racial profiling complaint, and when we are giving advice about steps to take or what can be done to investigate that complaint in that particular context, it might be helpful. She noted it may both show some things that could be very helpful and it may also show there are challenges that LEAs face when receiving these complaints as well. Member Sierra stated this was just one idea to consider as they further think through this draft. DAG Gomez thanked Member Sierra, and DOJ staff stated they appreciated her concrete examples of potential avenues that they could take.

Sierra stated that she thinks the draft looks great and does not suggest that they delete information. It is about adding information because she thinks the work of DOJ Staff is really incredible, and it is important. Member Armaline offered to help on methods or anything like that, like they have done in the past, just to get a hold of him offline, he is happy to step in and do anything he can do help.

Sierra stated that in the Accountability chapter they have a chart of the different LEAS and what they are doing with respect to internal auditing or review. She stated there were some of them where we were uncertain, and she was curious to the extent that they have resources to follow up with some of those agencies, to give them the opportunity also to let us know if we are kind of uncertain about whether or not they have an auditing mechanism or something akin to that. DAG Gomez said DOJ Staff can do that.

Member Sierra stated it would add to the report and again said she thinks the agencies would at least have that opportunity to provide the information if they would like to, or think is a good idea.

Co-Chair Criner asked whether there are any further proposed recommendations. Hearing no further responses, Co-Chair Criner moved to public comment.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Co-Chair Criner asked the public to raise their hand by using the Teams function on the bottom of their screen. Co-Chair Criner said that they would go by each section of the State of California, starting with the Northern California area.

A member of the public identifying himself as “The Jamaican” stated that he would not share where he was calling from. The last time they had this exchange, his full name and place he was calling from somehow appeared in the minutes of that meeting and he did not particularly appreciate that and would not invite a repetition today. He found interesting and unacceptable the exercise that they have undertaken today. There are a number of reasons for it, and the first one begins with data. Data is essential to our doing anything, but yet, DOJ continues to hide all of the data that it has had since April. His request is now over two months past due, and his attempts to communicate with the people who make these decisions have gone unanswered and unattended. Those requests became complaints. And we are here talking about complaints, and complaints cannot be made as they cannot be made to DOJ. They cannot be made to LEAs either. So DOJ should look inside, look internally first before it points a finger towards them. He needs to see RIPA stop data, and he has made lawful requests for it and made the request here on the meeting

site and that went ignored, too. He stated that he speaks directly to Member Angela Sierra, who sits here and seems to be looking at him, and she has not responded. He stated that he did not hear them and asked if they were saying something to him.

Co-Chair Criner stated that no one was saying anything and asked if they could refrain and try to give as much respect as possible, the Board would appreciate it.

The Jamaican stated that he had not been disrespectful; he has been direct. He said he takes it that the RIPA Board takes umbrage to his being direct. He stated the Board is not used to the likes of him but to get used to him. He said no one can file complaints with certain LEAs. That is a given. That has been long documented, and if you try, they will find a way to rephrase your complaint into something innocuous. This is why the commission in San Diego is being sued because of what they do. And any of them could be sued too for having done the same thing. He stated that the RIPA Board knows what these LEAs do, and he knows what they do, so the first thing to do is admit it. He then thanked the Board.

Co-Chair Criner thanked The Jamaican for his comment and then asked if there were any other comments from Southern California. He then asked if there were any other public comments at all. Hearing no other comments, Co-Chair Criner thanked all the members of the public for their comments.

Co-Chair Criner then thanked DOJ for listening, as well as the members of the Subcommittee for giving the public the opportunity to speak.

8. DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

Before concluding the meeting, Co-Chair Criner asked if DOJ had any questions regarding next steps. DOJ responded that they had no questions and thanked the Board for their great feedback.

Co-Chair Criner then asked if the Subcommittee members had any final comments or questions before moving to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no further comments or questions, Co-Chair Criner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Armaline so moved.

Member Armaline then welcomed the new Member Jordan Rall to the Board and asked DOJ to provide his contact information to Member Rall if she needed anything or had any questions and wanted to contact him. He told her that he was excited she was there and welcomed her.

Co-Chair Criner also told Member Rall that they were proud of her and welcomed her.

Member Hawkins also welcomed Member Rall to the Subcommittee. She told her to hang in there, and that she would get to understand it. She told her that they were fighting for their community to ensure that their rights are being protected and thanked Member Rall for joining the Subcommittee.

9. ADJOURN

Co-Chair Criner adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.