



As I sit to write my article this month, I can honestly say there are no shortages of topics to choose from. Among the Department, the City of Los Angeles and the State of California, there are a plethora of issues to tackle. There are so many, in fact, I find it hard to decide which one to tackle. Should my topic be Department policy issues and the administrative terrorism they wage against you? How about the political posturing over immigration and the capitulation of so many to a political ideology? Do I shine a light on the manipulation of deployment numbers by commands trying to reach the new 70 percent minimums? Maybe highlight the fiscal shell game currently being played by the City, or call out the recent actions of a Police Commissioner during a Commission meeting?

As I examine these problems, I recognize, my ability, as an individual, to influence these issues is minimal, if not futile, in some cases. No matter how intelligently or articulately I address an issue, the people who support, implement and enforce it are wholly committed to their viewpoint. In fact, it's rare for anyone in those groups to break ranks, whether it's command staff members, City Councilmembers, or the Mayor and his political cohorts. Their allegiance to the mission and message remain steadfast. That kind of dogmatic unity is a cornerstone of their strength.

As we confront the difficulties facing you, there are the occasional compromises and small victories, but broadly speaking, it is an uphill battle. This is where frustration, anger and apathy set in. I am not immune to it, and I know you aren't, either. I am not insinuating we will not continue to lobby, advocate and fight ferociously on your behalf. However, I have come to realize we cannot do it alone. Engagement by all is more effective than engagement by one.

The hardships you face are abundant, and there is no bashfulness in making them known, either. The disheartening part comes when input is needed, action is called for or solidarity needs to be shown. Bluntly speaking, we self-destruct. We fight amongst one another, backstab and undermine. We cave to apathy and assign blame. We lament our displeasures on social media and name call. We cling to our excuses and coddle our pride. We lack collective engagement and, therefore, lack unified action. Our opposition counts on this, and it's why I believe we need to change.

I will admit I have been as guilty as anyone of this, and my article is as much a confession as it is a challenge. I am genuinely committed to being your voice, but without input, engagement and

solidarity from the membership, that message quickly turns from your message into “Robert’s” message. Trust me, there is no power in that. Our clout is forged through active participation. It’s why the League describes itself as the union “representing the nearly 10,000 sworn members of the Los Angeles Police Department.” That number represents strength, but only if its members are active.



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The question isn't *how* do we start, but *where* do we start. I believe we start with ourselves. It's the only thing we have any degree of control over, so make a conscious choice to engage and be intentional in your involvement. I am not expecting everyone to become a delegate or dedicate hours of their week to League business. Be realistic about your approach and find a level of involvement you can stick to.

Some simple ways to get involved are to ensure you are signed up to receive the League's Membership Alerts. Log in to the League website (LAPD.com), scroll to the very bottom and click the word "profile." Then verify your current email address is listed and choose the updates you would like to receive. Learn who your divisional delegates are and ask them to update you on what's going on. Identify two of the biggest problems in your division and discuss workable solutions with your delegate. Read the minutes from the monthly delegate meeting, which can be found on the League's website. Log in to the members-only section, and you can find them under the delegate information tab. The minutes are a recap of all the issues discussed at the monthly

delegate meeting. You can also always reach out to me by email or phone for ideas and help in becoming involved.

This endeavor requires the input, cooperation and effort of everyone. We all play a role in the collective success of our membership. My job as a Director doesn't increase my status or elevate my importance, contrary to attitudes of the past. I simply play a role in our mutual aspirations. My challenge is for more of you to join in our shared goals. For those of you who already do play a part, whether big or small, I want to say thank you. It's your dedication, support and efforts that have helped us accomplish what we have. Let's maintain that momentum and strive for maximum participation.

Be smart. Be safe.

If you have questions, feel free to email me at RobertHarris@lappl.org or contact me at (951) 415-5943.