

**LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS -Antelope Valley chapters**

**Position paper/speech**

**February 8, 2012**

**A travesty gathers us here today. A family and a community mourn the death of their loved one.**

Christain Ivan Cobian was 26 years old when his life was snatched away. On that fateful day, he had just finished celebrating the baptism of two younger siblings, that of his 11 year old sister, Stephany and 13 year old brother, Anthony. The family had attended the baptismal ceremony at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in the late afternoon and returned home to continue the celebration with dinner and song. Mother and father, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews all gathered to celebrate the welcoming of their two young family members into the family of Christ. Before the night was over, one of their family members would lay on cold concrete, the life drawn out of him while he lay riddled with bullets.

According to the Sheriffs, Christian was stopped for riding a bike with a faulty back light. The parents were so devastated they could hardly speak. They were told it was Christian who lay on the street 30 to 40 feet before them but the Sheriffs never allowed them to see their son. The mother was not allowed to hold him, comfort or console him as she so desperately wanted. Stephany, the 11 year old sister pleaded and argued on her mother's behalf to no avail. Adding insult to injury, the parents were told to follow an ambulance to the hospital after which they would be allowed to see their son. When reaching the hospital, the ambulance driver informed the parents he was driving an empty vehicle and that their son was still at the scene of the crime. Upon their return to where their son still lay, they were not allowed to see him until 5:30 the next morning.

**A travesty gathers us here today. The life of a young man was taken by those who are sworn to protect and serve.** This death at the hands of the local Sheriffs is not an isolated incident. In the last several months, three people have been killed by the local Sheriffs utilizing methods which warrant questioning if not criticism. Two were shot within 10 days of each other and in all cases, the victims were shot multiple times, 11 times in one incident.

A thorough and impartial investigation of every one of these incidences and of the internal policies and culture which may be contributing factors should be investigated, as well. We have seen the results of past internal investigations conducted by sheriffs of other sheriffs. We demand a thorough and unbiased investigation by a third party not aligned with the Sheriff's Department. This investigation should review and assess the videos made by cameras on AVU campus buildings near the scene of the crime and these findings should be made public.

We believe it is time for the creation of a local Citizens Review Board to serve the Antelope Valley and call for Supervisor Antonovich to move to create such a body immediately. It is well justified and overdue.

**A travesty gathers us here today. Christian Ivan Cobian has already been judged and sentenced by our elected leaders and the local media.** It does our community no good when our elected officials make comments on public radio acting as judge and jury. They make a mockery of our judicial system and due process. Likewise, we might recommend our local newspaper editors take a refresher course in objective and unbiased reporting but we would be assuming that they are not aware of their actions. It is our perception that the AV Press has been working in lock-step with the local elected and the Sheriff's Department in convincing the public that our safety needs are much greater than what reality calls for

and in supporting an aggressive law enforcement policy which has resulted in these atrocities. We, therefore, call upon the AV Press to acknowledge their prejudice and work to correct it.

As a result of all that has taken place over the past two years starting with the findings in the Merrick Bob Report and all the incidents leading up to and including the deaths of Mr. Logan, Mr. Cobian and Mr. Handy, we demand the following:

- A thorough investigation by a neutral party of all shootings in the Antelope Valley by the Sheriff's Department of civilians since the October 13 shooting of Mr. Logan. This investigation should look into the service records of all officers involved in the shootings . In the case of Mr. Cobian, videos taken by cameras on AVU buildings near the scene of his death should be examined and the findings made public.
- A Citizens Review Board be created immediately to oversee the investigations of alleged police malpractice in the Antelope Valley.
- Local city officials refrain from making judgment regarding the culpability of the victim who has been shot and demonstrate respect for the judicial system and due process.
- The local media publish articles in an unbiased and objective and professional manner and leave the editorializing for the opinion section of the newspaper.