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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHANGES IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM NEED A NEW APPROACH TO CALIFORNIA'S LONG-TERM SENTENCING

Livestream: “Gender, Race, and Age Behind Bars: Impacts of Long-term Sentencing”

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WHAT: A dialogue and Q&A between two formerly-incarcerated women activists, Jane Dorotik and Romarilyn Ralston, and LA County Public Defender Ricardo D. García, on the compounded adverse impacts of long-term sentencing on the elderly, women, transgender people, and people of color in prison and beyond.

WHO:

- **Jane Dorotik** was incarcerated for almost 20 years on a wrongful conviction. She was released in April 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns, and her conviction was reversed in July 2020.
- **Romarilyn Ralston** was incarcerated for 23 years, and is now the Program Director of Project Rebound at the California State University-Fullerton. Both are organizers with the [California Coalition for Women Prisoners \(CCWP\)](#).
- **Ricardo D. García**, Los Angeles County Public Defender
- **Alicia Virani**, moderator, Gilbert Foundation Director of the Criminal Justice Program at the UCLA School of Law
- **Grace Kyungwon Hong**, host, Director of the UCLA Center for the Study of Women

WHEN & WHERE:

LOS ANGELES, February 3, 2021, 12:15-1:30pm on Zoom. Register [online](#). The event will also be livestreamed on CSW's [YouTube Channel](#).

Speakers will address problems with the parole process and why it is so difficult to be found suitable for parole in California, the unique impacts of long-term sentencing on women and women of color in particular, and what a public defender's role is in advising clients about the impact of long-term sentencing and barriers to parole and re-entry. The panel will also discuss Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón's new policies for the DA's Office to reevaluate and consider resentencing people who have already served 15 years in prison, as well as the new default position for DAs not to attend parole hearings.

CSW Director Grace Kyungwon Hong emphasized the importance of bringing diverse constituencies together, saying, "Rarely do public defenders, practicing lawyers, researchers, students, and the wider public hear from formerly incarcerated people themselves about the

effects of incarceration, in particular in relation to gender, race, and age. Jane and Romarilyn have decades of experience as organizers within and outside of prison walls and as such bring a valuable but often overlooked perspective to the conversation."

Jane Dorotik remarked that, "For all those who are truly interested in achieving public safety, the release of the elderly from prison and redirecting the approximately \$180,000 spent per woman per year into community resources is the smartest solution going."

Los Angeles County Public Defender Ricardo D. García observes that, "When someone is released from prison, they often face insurmountable barriers to finding employment, housing, education, medical care, and other social services. It's unconscionable that those barriers are exacerbated by rules and regulations created by incarceration. I look forward to the opportunity to engage in a meaningful conversation about solutions and perspectives."

The UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) will host this event in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office and the Criminal Justice Program at the UCLA School of Law. It is co-sponsored by the Promise Institute for Human Rights at the UCLA School of Law.

The [UCLA Center for the Study of Women](#) is an internationally recognized center for research on gender, sexuality, and women's issues and the first organized research unit of its kind in the University of California system. Its mission is to work towards a world in which education and scholarship are tools for social justice feminism, improving the lives of people of all genders.

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