

The first few months of 2021 have proved to be promising. We finally have a COVID-19 vaccine that's become more widely available and accessible to Fresno County's first responders. This option will provide additional protection for deputies who already confront a wide variety of dangers each day. To date, every FSO deputy who wanted a vaccine should have received at least the initial one of two required injections. Please let me know if you have not and we will ensure you are taken care of.

### **An Election to Follow**

An election to watch in the Bay Area is drawing interest from law enforcement leaders throughout the state.

On February 24, 2021, the San Francisco Chronicle published a lengthy article about Deputy District Attorney Jimmie Wilson- who announced his intention to run against his boss for Alameda District Attorney.

While the election is a long way off, it is encouraging to see a candidate with a positive story, suggesting efforts to collectively improve the county's criminal justice system. In the past, we have often seen the usual anti-police rhetoric.

The winds are changing in the world of "tough on crime" as a prosecutor. We see that here as well, in Fresno County. I field many calls from frustrated detectives about cases being NCF'd and the inability to hold criminals in custody. It stems from this big movement. Although people like George Gascon (Los Angeles DA) and Chesa Boudin (San Francisco DA) are not who people in this region of the state want to see, the old prosecution mantra of heavy sentences and solitary confinement is just not in the vocabulary any longer for California.

I am attaching this article for you to read. Whether or not Jimmie Wilson actually does file or wins – goes to show what the temperature is out there right now when it comes to prosecution. Based on Prop 47, 57 and AB109- law enforcement officers have to do more with less. I believe the public is going to want to see what happens with criminals after they are arrested. We will monitor this race and see exactly what happens in the coming months.

# Alameda County prosecutor seeks to unseat his current boss as D.A.

By Megan Cassidy



Jessica Christian / The Chronicle

Alameda County Deputy District Attorney Jimmie Wilson is running for district attorney. His boss, Nancy O'Malley, has yet to announce whether she'll seek re-election in 2022.

A veteran prosecutor at the Alameda County District Attorney's Office said Tuesday that he's running to lead the agency in 2022, potentially setting up a clash with his current boss, Nancy O'Malley.

Deputy District Attorney and former union plumber Jimmie Wilson, 60, will campaign on a promise of nuanced, data-driven prosecution and a vow to hold both violent and small-time offenders accountable for their actions.

Wilson, a Democrat, called himself a “different kind of progressive,” and sought to distance himself from traditional “tough-on-crime” prosecutors as well as the state's reformer district attorneys like San Francisco's Chesa Boudin or George Gascón in Los Angeles.

He's struck a moderate-left approach to California's hot-button issues like the death penalty, cash bail and charging juveniles as adults — stopping short of a vow to eliminate them entirely. Instead, Wilson said he will prioritize tackling violent crime, collecting crime and prosecution data, and expanding the office's diversion opportunities and role in violence-prevention programs.

“If you really want to reduce crime, you have to hold people accountable,” Wilson said in an exclusive interview with The Chronicle. “What do you do with someone after they've been charged with a crime? That's something totally different.”

O'Malley, who has served as the county's top prosecutor since 2009, has not announced whether she plans to run for a fourth term, and declined to comment for this story. Wilson said he will run regardless of her decision.

Wilson declined to comment on O'Malley directly, but took aim at some of the office's policies that he said are in need of an overhaul. He vowed to create diversion programs that do more than forcing a defendant to pay and watch a video, and to create a system of data collection that tracks and publishes statistics like plea deals, charging decisions and demographics.

Wilson said he does not support the death penalty "in its current form," and will welcome petitions to retroactively test DNA for those sentenced to death. He said he supports sending some juveniles 16 and older to adult court, "when the crime and criminal history demand it," and vowed to invest in creative solutions to reform cash bail.

His approach, Wilson said, doesn't favor any single philosophy.

"I don't have all the answers — no one has all the answers," he said. "To make this work, we have to be open and honest about the things that we excelled at ... and the things that we need to improve."

A Black man born and raised in San Francisco's violence-plagued Bayview neighborhood, Wilson said he grew up watching both his parents work to improve conditions in their community in lieu of opportunities to move elsewhere.

His mother, Ernestine, earned her college degree while raising three children and later went on to become a public school teacher and founder of the community's first girls' club. His father, Jimmie Wilson Jr., made a career building low-income apartments, and in his spare time helped ex-felons secure jobs with the city.

While playing football at San Jose State University, Wilson suffered a career-ending back injury and dropped out to become a union plumber. A second back injury on the job prompted the husband and father of three to enroll in night school at Laney College in Oakland; he later won a scholarship to UC Berkeley and, at 40, graduated with his undergraduate degree in 2000.

Four years later, Wilson earned his degree from UC Hastings College of the Law.

Over the last 16 years at the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, Wilson has risen through the ranks as a line prosecutor to leading prosecutions in gang, sex assault and homicide cases.

Running on the campaign slogan "Safety is a Civil Right," Wilson said his history makes him uniquely qualified to tackle crime in a place like Oakland, where low-income communities of color disproportionately fall victim to violence. The office additionally covers cities including Alameda, Berkeley, San Leandro and Fremont.

Current and former colleagues, as well as defense attorneys interviewed by The Chronicle, painted Wilson as an ideologically middle-of-the road prosecutor who's open to solutions other than imprisonment for people accused of crimes.

Alameda County defense attorney Ernie Castillo, who has worked on the other side of the courtroom from Wilson for over a decade, said the prosecutor has always been eager to listen to defendants' struggles and would share his own experiences growing up.

"I'm not saying he was soft ... but he definitely would try to figure out a way to make sure people didn't come back through the system," Castillo said.

In a deep-blue stronghold like Alameda County, political spectators have predicted that O'Malley's next challenger would emerge from her left. California voters in recent years have begun to reject the tough-on-crime policies that led to decades of mass incarceration, instead favoring reforms that offer second chances and embrace undoing the past wrongs of the criminal justice system.

O'Malley, a moderate Democrat, had resisted some criminal justice reforms over her tenure that involved lessening sentences for some offenders, and received criticism from critics who said she failed to hold some police accountable for wrongdoing. Last fall though, O'Malley filed her first charge against a police officer for using lethal force, in a move that was seen as a sign of changing political winds.

Both Gascón and Boudin have become lightning rods in the state's criminal justice community, earning both adulation and recall efforts for efforts to curtail tough-on-crime laws like charging enhancements, the death penalty, charging minors as adults and the "three strikes" law.

These views are more closely aligned with Pamela Price, a civil rights attorney who ran a close race against O'Malley in 2018, and has begun campaigning again for the position in 2022. And while another leftist candidate may still emerge, this is not Wilson.

To understand Wilson's philosophy, he said, "you've got to understand where I came from."

"I've lived in Bayview for most of my life, and have seen some of my friends go to jail, die, on drugs ... I've seen the gamut," he said. "It shapes the way I see my role as a prosecutor, and it shapes how I see my community."

Megan Cassidy is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: [megan.cassidy@sfchronicle.com](mailto:megan.cassidy@sfchronicle.com)  
Twitter: @meganrcassidy

"He definitely would try to figure out a way to make sure people didn't come back through the system."  
Alameda County defense attorney Ernie Castillo

In addition, there's another controversy brewing in Southern California following a large rally against the Los Angeles Police Officer's Union. The movement is working to change how officer's police the city. It's definitely something to follow and monitor. Below is an article from The Los Angeles Daily News that details what's happening. Los Angeles Police Protective League will be engaged in a local battle, just trying to prove themselves and the almost 10,000 officers who patrol their city.

## Black Lives Matter movement launches campaign against LA police officer's union

[Elizabeth Chou](#)

People raise their fists as they listen to speakers during a Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles press conference and rally to launch a campaign against the Los Angeles city police union which represents nearly 10,000 rank-and-file officers in front of the American Civil Liberties Union building in Los Angeles on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. (Photo by Keith Birmingham, Pasadena Star-News/ SCNG)

Last April, Marine Vergara peered from outside a perimeter that had been set up around a scene where her brother, Daniel Hernandez, lay dying after being shot by a police officer.

The Police Commission last December determined that the officer, Toni McBride, broke department policy, saying that her first four shots were justified, but not the fifth and sixth shot. The officer was the daughter of a leader in the Los Angeles Police Protective League.

Ten months later, on Wednesday, Feb. 24, Vergara stood atop the bed of a truck on West 8th Street, roughly three miles away from where her brother died. Her voice echoed through a booming speaker, her finger pointed at the headquarters of the LAPPL, the union representing nearly 10,000 LAPD officers.

"We are not afraid of any of these police officers," she shouted toward the building. "We're not afraid of the directors. We're not afraid of (LAPPL director) Jamie McBride."

Several dozen protesters gathered on Wednesday, Feb. 24, in the first of what is being promised as a weekly campaign put on by the local chapter of the Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles aimed at challenging the union status of the LAPPL.

**"We are here as a start of a new weekly protest to topple police associations, to end police associations and you all know it might be a long fight — or it might not," said said Melina Abdullah, a leading organizer with Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles, "but we know every fight we've engaged in we have won."**

LAPPL director Craig Lally released a statement Wednesday describing the aims of the weekly campaign as "divisive."

"The focus on divisiveness and promotion of unworkable demands does nothing to improve police and community relationships and does nothing to address the violent crime, shootings, and

homicides that are plaguing many neighborhoods in Los Angeles," Lally said. "The easy path is to vilify and divide, the tougher path is to work together to improve policing, we are choosing the latter path and urge those intent on division to join us."

The effort comes amid a national conversation around whether police unions are too powerful, with some activists alleging their contracts contain provisions that protect problem officers over the interests of the public.

In recent weeks, amid a pandemic-fueled budget crisis, the L.A. police union avoided threats of layoffs in LAPD's ranks after agreeing to delay previously scheduled raises.

Helping to stoke BLM's ire recently was news that a Valentine had been shared among LAPD officers making light of George Floyd, a Minnesota man whose death last summer at the knee of a police officer touched off nationwide protests against police brutality.

BLM-LA led weeks of local racial justice protests — largely fueled by anger over George's death — and was credited with helping to oust former District Attorney Jackie Lacey, who they'd accused of failing to prosecute cases against officers who have killed people. Defeating Lacey at the polls was George Gascon, who has faced opposition from police unions and some prosecutors over his policies, including trying to cease some sentencing enhancements, the cash bail system and the death penalty.

Lally took issue with BLM's efforts, noting that the majority of police officer ranks are comprised of "Black, Hispanic and Asian (officers) — and the number of women and LGBTQ officers grows with each academy."

"It's unfortunate that so much energy is going toward attacking working-class officers and dividing our community," he said.

Activists have urged Mayor Eric Garcetti and Police Chief Michel Moore to reinvent LAPD and abolish policies that they say fuel unnecessary police shootings. Abdullah said Wednesday that this effort went well beyond that. Their goal was to defund and ultimately abolish the LAPD, via challenging its police union, which they allege has set the rules for how officers are disciplined, at the expense of the public's safety.

"Have you ever seen (LAPPL) on the front-lines or a picket supporting \$15 an hour? Anyone has ever seen that? Hell no, because they don't care about working people," said Baba Akili, another organizer.

"Our presence today and every Wednesday ... is to send the message to these people across the street that we are going to end these associations," said Akili. "We will not be bullied anymore, we will not give up our budgets anymore and we are not allowing to have an extra set of rights."

Lally called the effort unfair and counterproductive. "We should be collectively working toward a safer Los Angeles," he said, "and enacting policies and programs that uplift all of our community."

Lally scoffed at protesters' cries that the protective league was "not a union."

"Yet another dangerous idea from the anti-public safety fringes that's akin to their previous ideas to defund the LAPD budget by 93% or to end incarceration for dangerous convicts," Lally said. "It's an outright lie to suggest that this group has any ability to strip the union representation rights of our members or any member of a union. That's an anti-democratic tactic usually promoted by authoritarian regimes, not organizations that purport to be rooted in respecting workers' rights and democracy."

My goal in sharing these two articles is to keep each one of you at the forefront of issues that are happening that could have ripple effects. We need to be aware of the conversations and movements taking place throughout the state as it relates to the aggressive and progressive approach being taken against law enforcement. Not only for frontline cops, but also at the District Attorney level with softening crime. Of course- Prop 47, Prop 57, and AB109 continues to be an ongoing hurdle and frustration. But, fortunately in Fresno County, we are still able to functionally do our jobs.

I will continue updating you on these important types of movements and what the recourse is- so we can work to defeat them, or let the public know it's a false narrative.

Hope you are all safe and well.

My best,

Eric