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1 morning. I'm Professor Cindy Struckman-Johnson from  
2 the University of South Dakota. And I have a  
3 background in conducting prison rape research.

4 COMMISSIONER KANEB: I'm John Kaneb. I'm  
5 from Boston and I'm in private business.

6 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you.

7 We will now have welcoming remarks from  
8 Mr. Donald Rodriguez, who is area commander of the  
9 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

10 And in that position he oversees the  
11 operation of four Los Angeles County correction  
12 facilities, including the Mira Loma Detention Center  
13 in Lancaster, California, which houses an average of  
14 800 to 1,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
15 detainees on any given day.

16 Mr. Rodriguez, thank you for your presence.  
17 Since you're only making an opening statement, we  
18 don't need to swear you, but we welcome you.

19 MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Chairman,  
20 Members of the Commission, Don Rodriguez,  
21 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

22 I have to apologize. I actually did  
23 prepare written testimony.

24 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Then we're happy to take  
25 your testimony.

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1           If you could stand, please.

2           Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
3 testimony you will present to this Commission today  
4 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
5 the truth so help you God?

6           MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I do.

7           CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you.

8           MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: I currently oversee  
9 about half of Los Angeles County's jail system,  
10 which includes the Mira Loma detention facility.  
11 And rather than read my testimony verbatim, I would  
12 like to give you some introduction into what we do  
13 and some of the preventive measures that are  
14 beginning to take place in Los Angeles County in our  
15 jail system.

16           Mira Loma was opened in 1997 as a contract  
17 with the Federal Government. It is run by the  
18 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department with a  
19 captain, lieutenant, sergeants, deputy sheriff  
20 personnel, and professional staff.

21           The staff is about 123 professional staff  
22 and 66 sworn police officers, sergeants,  
23 lieutenants, and a captain.

24           It's a minimum security facility. It's a  
25 dormitory environment with direct supervision.

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1 There are one custody assistant in every dormitory.

2 We also have deputy sheriffs who serve as  
3 prowlers. We meet Title 15 of the California code,  
4 minimum standards for jails at that facility also  
5 where we do security checks every hour, where two  
6 deputies go into the dorm and physically check all  
7 of the inmates every hour, as well as the dorm  
8 officer.

9 It's an unlocked compound. They can leave  
10 the building. They can go out in the courtyard,  
11 which has grass and trees. And then from there they  
12 can actually leave and go into a center area which  
13 has soccer fields.

14 The majority of our population tends to be  
15 Spanish-speaking with about 80 percent from Latin  
16 America or South America.

17 We house generally by where the detainees  
18 are from because of the cultural influences there.  
19 And a portion of my staff actually speaks Spanish.

20 And with the changes in Los Angeles County  
21 in the last few years with the population and our  
22 hiring, we're hiring a rather large number of  
23 Spanish-speaking personnel.

24 So the language barrier, at least for the  
25 80 to 90 percent of Hispanics, we provide employees

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1 who actually speak Spanish.

2           The ones that do not, we have assistance  
3 from the Federal Government to allow them  
4 interpretation.

5           We also have lockboxes there so that they  
6 can provide comments on our performance without the  
7 personnel seeing it. Only the supervisors get  
8 those.

9           And -- but one of the things that I would  
10 like to bring forward today is that in one of my  
11 jails last year we put in a closed-circuit  
12 television system within the jail. That system  
13 monitors the activities of all of the inmates and  
14 our staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's  
15 recorded.

16           And it can then be downloaded onto a CD-ROM  
17 that's encrypted. And we are currently using those  
18 images for prosecution of inmate assaults in that  
19 jail.

20           So what it's done for us is that in the  
21 past when an inmate comes up and says, I hurt  
22 myself, I fell, I cut myself shaving -- and we  
23 really know he was assaulted, but he's not willing  
24 to discuss that with anybody -- we go back, review  
25 the tapes, and we can actually view the assault.

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1           We then go in, identify the suspects, and  
2 we charge them with the crime. And we use that as  
3 the best evidence.

4           That has been in place for about a year  
5 now. We have about 80 documented incidents. We  
6 also monitor our deputy's performance on that.  
7 Whenever they enter the dorm or do anything, they're  
8 monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So we  
9 can see their performance as well.

10           I invite you if you ever have time and  
11 you're in Los Angeles County again to please come by  
12 and see it. Or if you would like to send staff to  
13 view it, it's a very -- it's the beginning of a  
14 better way of capturing the activities that take  
15 place in our -- and, again, in that jail, it's a  
16 dormitory environment with 123 inmates in each dorm.

17           That program is beginning to be duplicated  
18 throughout the system. The next step is Central  
19 Jail in Los Angeles County which currently houses  
20 approximately 4400 inmates.

21           That program will cost approximately  
22 \$20 million and will include closed-circuit  
23 televisions within the jail system.

24           As well as that, we're looking at the RFID  
25 system for the wrist bands where you can track the

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1 inmate's movements with a wrist band so that we can  
2 then compare the video with the actual tracking  
3 system so we would know exactly what inmate was in  
4 what point at what time.

5           Again, that is not going to eliminate the  
6 problem of assault and rapes in prison, but it will  
7 assist us in better documentation and tracking and  
8 prosecution of these.

9           And with that, I'm open to questions.

10           CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for  
11 your testimony.

12           Let me just ask, have you had any reported  
13 incidents of either staff-on-detainee rapes or  
14 assaults of that nature, or inmate on inmate or  
15 detainee on detainee, allegations of that nature?

16           MR. DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, we have.  
17 At Mira Loma detention facility since we opened in  
18 1997, there have been no reported rapes of  
19 detainees. We have had one incidence of a detainee  
20 and a staff involved in an allegation of sexual  
21 activity.

22           That employee resigned from the department  
23 prior to being interviewed as part of the  
24 administrative investigation. So that's all we've  
25 had at the detention facility.