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42nd KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

By Tom Wiknich

No one is doing anything to stop the sheriff from closing the jail in Ridgecrest, putting all of our lives at risk.

This is a tough one. In case you didn’t know it yet, Sheriff Youngblood is still proceeding in closing the local jail here in Ridgecrest. This decision is going to put all of our lives at risk. His decision effectively will remove officers from our streets almost daily, while they’ll have to travel to Mojave or Bakersfield to book prisoners starting July 1st. We are the only city in Kern County being hit by decisions that will affect our lives. It appears the city council, mayor, and Supervisor Gleason are doing nothing to stop this outrageous decision.

I say to everyone, while the casino issue is important right now, this issue with the jail closing is even more important. Our council needs to be able to handle more than one important issue at a time. Even after the entire audience applauded my concern, not one council person made a comment reacting to my comments. Not one council person shared publically in my displeasure in the sheriff’s decision. Not one comment from them. Why? Why are they silent? Is putting our lives at risk ok with them? Are they so afraid of the county that they are not willing to criticize them? Have they accepted there is nothing they can do, so why fight? Are they afraid to fight the county? Don’t they see the anger being expressed in the presidential campaigns? There are millions of people mad at our representatives not fighting for issues that affect us or that we see as extremely important.

There is still time to stop this nonsense. Our council, mayor and supervisor have to step up and do it. They are the ones that we elected to fight for our safety. To make sure we have police officer’s on the street to protect and serve. While Chief Strand is making plans to deal with this cut in service, it will still cost us money from an already tight budget. The plan will not always keep a full force on the street. Will we survive this cut? We’d be forced to. We don’t have to put up with being the step child city of Kern County.

In conclusion, if you think as I, that our council, mayor, and supervisor should be doing more to stop this decision of the sheriff, let them know. Tell them that our safety is not something to be just brushed aside as unimportant. Tell them to fight to keep the jail open in Ridgecrest. Silence is not appropriate or acceptable.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.