



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY
CRIMINAL DEFENSE
BAR ASSOCIATION**

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Sent by mail

Presiding Judge John W. Vineyard
Riverside Superior Court – Executive Office
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

April 1, 2020

Re: Riverside County Criminal Defense Bar Association

To the Honorable John W. Vineyard:

In these rapidly evolving times, changes within the courts have left the private criminal defense bar scrambling just to keep up. Through our lack of representation and involvement as justice partners in the decision-making processes, we have been over-looked by the courts as a significant participant in our local justice system, particularly with the implementation of new policy.

While the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue for us, it is not a new one. For quite some time the private defense bar has felt left out of the development of new court policies and procedures. While we appreciate the work of Public Defender Steven Harmon as well as the various conflict panel contract holders, they do not speak for us. One of the primary reasons this organization was formed was so that the private defense bar could have proper representation with the courts in these discussions.

I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself as the President of the newly formed Riverside County Criminal Defense Bar Association (RCCDBA). Formed recently on March 27, 2020, the RCCDBA has already amassed over 100 members and that number has been rapidly growing. Our membership consists entirely of criminal defense lawyers who practice within the Riverside County criminal courts.

Moving forward, we respectfully request that we be considered a justice partner and be involved in all relevant meetings. I believe that our inclusion will be helpful in the free flow of information, as well in helping develop solutions with the courts that work for the entire legal community.

We look forward to helping you continue to make the Riverside County criminal court system a fair and great place both for lawyers and defendants. I can be reached any time at (951) 667-5293 or by email at GD@GDDLAW.COM.

Sincerely,



Graham D. Donath, President
Riverside County Criminal Defense Bar Association

cc: Assistant Presiding Judge John M. Monterosso
Supervising Judge John D. Molloy
Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin
Riverside County Public Defender Steve Harmon