

Sheriff's office monitor is draining Maricopa County

A monitor keeps moving goalposts for MCSO officers, putting our safety at risk | Opinion

Robert Warshaw keeps moving the goalposts on MCSO, adding additional requirements on sheriff's deputies that had little to do with the original ruling.

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- Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has been under federal oversight since 2007 due to a lawsuit against former Sheriff Joe Arpaio.
- The author, who chairs the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, argues that the federal monitor, Robert Warshaw, is unfairly prolonging oversight despite MCSO's near-full compliance.
- The board of supervisors is considering legal options to end the oversight.

When I became chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, I pledged to expand prosperity and improve public safety.

But a system designed for past problems is preventing future progress.

The board provides the budget for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, but [federal oversight](#) of this essential law enforcement agency is an albatross placing our residents at risk.

A federal monitor's office, appointed by a judge, is being paid millions of dollars each year with no end in sight.

I'm a conservative Republican, the first Latino chair of the board and a strong supporter of law enforcement.

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And I'm appalled by how the federal monitor, Robert Warshaw, keeps unfairly moving the compliance goalposts through continued supplemental orders.

MCSO is a different agency than it was in 2007

By the end of this year, Maricopa County taxpayers will have spent about [\\$350 million](#) in compliance costs since Warshaw was appointed in 2013.

I'm sounding the alarm on this attack on local governance.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has come a long way since 2007, when a former sheriff was [sued for a policy of racially profiling](#) Hispanic drivers.

A federal court ruled against the sheriff. But just as important, Maricopa County's voters removed him from office in a subsequent election.

Since then, three sheriffs have worked tirelessly to implement substantive reform, including the implementation of [multiple advisory boards](#) to ensure a direct line of communication between the community and the sheriff's office.

Deputies also diligently comply with more than a decade of rigorous court orders, and every time they get near a compliance threshold, the goalposts get moved back.

Sheriff's office is nearly in full compliance

Warshaw has a pronounced financial incentive to prolong oversight.

Roughly \$34 million has gone to him and his firm. Warshaw is also collecting big fees in other cities [including Oakland](#), California, where their taxpayers have been on the hook for decades.

The public gets little in return.

Warshaw, not elected by voters, operates without transparency. He is provided a generous travel and expense budget, including nearly \$90,000 this year for an infrequently used office space in downtown Phoenix.

This is infuriating.

Maricopa County taxpayers are not any safer when MCSO suffers from attrition as deputies walk out the door to take jobs with other municipal police departments that are not under Warshaw's thumb.

Requirements for officers continue to expand

MCSO, under Sheriff Jerry Sheridan, is bending over backwards to comply with the judicial orders.

No law enforcement agency is perfect, but MCSO is [nearly in full compliance](#) on these rigorous court orders, despite the evolving standards.

That includes the core constitutional policing requirements that gave rise to the original lawsuit.

But MCSO is saddled with too many compliance requirements, many of them unrelated to the issue of the original lawsuit and which continue to expand each year.

Opinion: [Arpaio's racial profiling is costly. Don't blame a court for that](#)
[One provision](#) requires deputies to document 13 items, such as the perceived race of the driver and the total number of occupants in the vehicle, during each traffic stop. MCSO is at or above the required 94% compliance in 12 of 13 of those criteria.

However, the entire sheriff's agency is deemed "non-compliant" until MCSO can stay over the compliance threshold for every provision, every quarter, for three straight years. That's outrageous.

And the meter keeps running on our tax dollars.

I'm looking at legal options to stop this

My colleagues on the board and I are exploring every reasonable and responsible path forward. We are strongly considering available legal options because the MCSO of today is not the MCSO of 2007.

We are not going to accept the outrageous actions of the monitor in perpetuity that make it harder to hire and retain good people.

Let's protect MCSO so they can continue to protect us.

Let's also ensure that our public safety investments make our communities safer — not bog them down in paperwork.

Accountability works best when it runs in both directions.

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