


# Supervisors call for end to \$353M oversight of sheriff's office

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(The Center Square) — [Federal](#) oversight of the Melendres orders, which is expected to [cost Maricopa County taxpayers](#) \$353 million by 2026, is no longer necessary, Supervisor Thomas Galvin told The Center Square.

Another member of the Board of Supervisors for [Arizona's](#) most populous county is also calling for an end to the orders. Supervisor Debbie Lesko called the cost “unacceptable.”

“Lining the pockets of a court-appointed monitor instead of investing in the Sheriff's department doesn't make our neighborhoods safer,” Lesko said in a news release.

The Melendres orders came after the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office was [found](#) to have violated Hispanic people's constitutional rights after the office used racial profiling and illegal traffic stops against Latinos.

As a result of the Manuel de Jesus Ortega Melendres v. Arpaio lawsuit in 2007, the sheriff's office was put under the oversight of a federally appointed supervisor to implement policy reforms.

Last week, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office held a meeting to provide an update on the oversight.

Galvin, who has been the supervisor for almost four years, said the meetings about the federal oversight are sparsely attended, but at last week's meeting, many people showed up to express concerns about how much of their taxes are being spent on compliance.

He said the Melendres orders, which have been in effect since 2013, are anticipated to cost Maricopa County taxpayers \$353 million as of next year.

“The voters are just not being served well by the system we have,” Galvin said.

Galvin told The Center Square he was pleased to see residents come out and ask Robert Warshaw, the federal supervisor, tough questions. He added that Warshaw declined to answer many of them.

To illustrate, Galvin said Warshaw refused to disclose his salary, something Galvin would like to know.

Warshaw has been the only federally [appointed](#) supervisor overseeing the sheriff's office since 2014.

Galvin noted over \$2 million a year goes toward Warshaw and his office.

"Does he have any incentive to tell the judge that the sheriff's office has improved and is no longer doing what was originally alleged in the 2007 lawsuit? Or does he have an incentive to just keep this going, moving the compliance goalpost so he can still make a decent salary?" Galvin questioned.

He said "none of the allegations under the original lawsuit" continue to apply.

The compliance goal posts for the county have changed, Galvin said.

"Why is the sheriff's office still under federal oversight?" he asked. "And why is Robert Warshaw still getting paid to make the sheriff's office provide compliance reports?"

At the [meeting](#), Warshaw told Maricopa County residents that the sheriff's office has made significant progress and that the Melendres orders won't last indefinitely.

Galvin, meanwhile, noted Warshaw also monitors the Oakland and Louisville, Kentucky, police departments and other law enforcement agencies around the country.

"I think there's a lot of questions being asked about Robert Warshaw from coast to coast," Galvin noted.

In 2023, the NAACP requested that then-Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao [investigate](#) Warshaw after the mayor placed former Oakland Police Chief LeRonne Armstrong on administrative leave. The police chief was disciplined for not properly [handling](#) two police department investigations.

Since the Melendres orders came into effect, Maricopa County has had four sheriffs: Joe Arpaio, Paul Penzone, Russ Skinner and Jerry Sheridan.

Galvin said the current sheriff, Sheridan, can't run the sheriff's office because Warshaw is looking over his shoulders. "[Sheridan] has two hands tied behind his back."

Regarding the \$353 million, Galvin said this money could have gone to increase pay for the county's sheriff deputies, detention officers, emergency dispatchers and resources.

The federal oversight of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has "decimated the agency," with 26% of its jobs still vacant, Galvin said. He cited the office's problems with recruitment, retention and attrition.

Galvin said the most important issue of his chairmanship this year of the Board of Supervisors is shining a "light on the federal monitor."

He said the next meeting on the Melendres orders will be held in October. Galvin noted he is going to notify his constituents to ensure they can attend and ask Warshaw "good questions."

The Center Square reached out to the U.S. Department of Justice, but did not get an immediate response.