

September 6, 2011

Mr. Carrizosa,

In an article in the Ventura County Star dated September 5, 2011 by Raul Hernandez you are quoted as questioning the accuracy of the membership numbers for the Alliance of California Judges set forth in the article. As the Directors of that organization, and thus quite aware of our membership numbers, we find your comment highly inappropriate and personally offensive.

As the "Spokesperson and Senior communications specialist at Administrative Office of the Courts" your comments come with the air of some insight or knowledge. Please provide any and all information you possess which caused you to challenge our membership number in a published article.

As we are certain that there is no basis for your assertion, we are asking you for an immediate apology and retraction of your statement. Who are you to question the veracity of any director of the Alliance in representing to the Judicial Council or to anyone else that the Alliance has 400 members? We ask you to contact Mr. Hernandez and retract that statement and explain to him in NO uncertain terms that you had NO basis for making that baseless allegation.

Second, in the article you are represented as stating "there have been pay and hiring freezes in the Office of the Courts, along with no cost-of-living pay increases in the last four years." As we have reviewed copies of the "Temporary worker" lists and contract employee list we have reason to believe this statement is also inaccurate. Your suggestion that the AOC has not brought on new and additional staff and that their pay has remained stagnant is at best misleading. We have reviewed records which demonstrate the vast majority of AOC employees received a 3.5% retroactive pay increase and the number of temporary workers has increased significantly over the past couple years.

Additionally, according to an article by Amy Yarbrough dated 12/9/09:

"Between February 2008 and July 2009, the AOC elevated nearly 80 employees, and raised their pay as much as 31 percent, brushing aside its own self-imposed freeze on promotions, according to payroll records from the State Controller's Office.

The records show that while the agency imposed once-monthly furlough days on employees with one hand, it has increased salaries so much with the other that, coupled with new hires, its payroll costs grew 6 percent from July 2008 to July 2009, for a total of nearly \$4.2 million per year.

William Vickrey, administrative director of the courts, said promotions given since the freeze were limited to critical positions and were allowed only through a rigorous exemption process. Most of the raises, he said, were 3.5 percent merit increases authorized by Chief Justice Ronald M. George for both the AOC and the appellate courts."

It would be difficult for you to deny having this information as you were quoted in the same article justifying the raises as follows:

“Between July 2008 and July 2009, the average raise for AOC's non-hourly employees was 3.76 percent, according to the Daily Journal's analysis, only slightly above the 3.5 Vickrey said was given as a merit increase. But a number of other employees got bigger raises, some as high as 14 percent.

Philip Carrizosa, a spokesman for the AOC, said in an e-mail that some of the outsized raises were necessary to keep top-level employees. He said others received big raises because of "increased job responsibilities," even though their job titles did not change.”

We are requesting you immediately contact Raul Hernandez and correct these misleading and inaccurate statements as well.

Sincerely,

Judge Andy Banks

Judge Jeffrey Burke

Judge Tia Fisher

Judge Mark Forcum

Judge Maryanne Gilliard

Judge Susan Lopez Giss

Judge Dan Goldstein

Judge W. Kent Hamlin

Judge Michael Hayes

Justice Thomas Hollenhorst

Judge David Lampe

Judge Kevin McCormick

Judge John Somers

Judge Steve White

Directors,

Alliance of California Judges

cc: Chief Justice Tani Cantil Sakauye

Ron Overholt