



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3000 • Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-5660 • Fax (916) 322-0886

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2020

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT:
Jay Wierenga, FPPC
(916) 322-7761

FPPC issues \$1.35M penalty against LA County Board of Supervisors for campaign violations

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) today approved a \$1.35M settlement with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for violating the law regarding campaign-related communications at public expense.

It stems from a complaint received by the FPPC Enforcement Division involving a March, 2017 Special Election in Los Angeles County regarding Measure H, and an additional complaint alleging the County used public funds to support Measure W in the November, 2018 election. The FPPC Enforcement Division opened two cases alleging the County's activities qualified it as a committee, triggering the Political Reform Act's filing and disclosure requirements and failed to include advertisement disclosures. Measure H passed with just over the required margin for approval.

"This is a clear violation of the public trust when their leaders willfully ignore the law to use taxpayer money in a political manner," said FPPC Chair Richard C. Miadich. "Our elected officials are not above the law and should be held accountable for their decisions. I hope this sends a warning to others that the FPPC will not sit idly by when public officials illegally use taxpayer money for political purposes. The integrity of our political system compels nothing less."

Included in today's action is a settlement with and a dismissal of a civil suit with similar allegations filed by The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA). All parties have agreed to resolve these matters with this joint settlement, which is in conjunction with the civil settlement in the above-referenced case and the conditions and requirements of that settlement.

"This illegal and increasingly-used tactic by local government officials will continue to be a focus and priority for the FPPC," said Chair Miadich. "We're seeking expanded powers for the non-partisan FPPC to enforce this law, as we continue to fight on behalf of the public for transparency and accountability by our government officials."

A similar case involving Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) resulted in the transit agency paying a penalty in December, 2018, spurring the FPPC to seek enhanced enforcement powers in these types of cases. The Commission sent letters to legislative leadership asking them to seek a legislative way to enhance the FPPC's ability to prosecute such cases, and pursued legislation on its own to do so. The FPPC plans to continue seeking such legislation and enforcement ability.

The State will receive \$600,000 as part of the settlement. Los Angeles County will also be paying legal fees in total of \$150,000 to the HJTA, and HJTA will receive \$600,000 as part of the agreement.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3000 • Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-5660 • Fax (916) 322-0886

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) is California's governmental ethics and campaign disclosure agency.

X X X