



(Approved June X, 2025)
CALIFORNIA FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
MINUTES OF HEARING, Public Session
Thursday, May 15, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Present: Chair Silver, Commissioner Ortiz, Commissioner Wilson, and Commissioner Brandt

Executive Staff Present:

Galena West, Executive Director
Dave Bainbridge, General Counsel
Shrdha Shah, Chief of Audits and Assistance
Jue Wang, PhD, Chief of Administration
Lindsey Nakano, Senior FPPC Legislative Counsel
Shery Yang, Communications Director

Call to Order.

Chair Silver called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

1. Public Comments for items not on the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Laurie Alderman of the City of Cotati commented on a local official's Form 700s.

2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: To approve the April 2025 meeting minutes. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz, seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion passed 4-0.

3-5. Consent Calendar

3. In the Matter of Donna Feiner; FPPC Case No. 23/227.

4. In the Matter of Cathedral City; FPPC No. 21/156.

Assistant Chiefs of Enforcement Angela Brereton and Chris Burton presented.

Chair Silver noted for the regulated community that copies of communications are now included in the stipulations when the cases relate to mass mailings at public expense.

5. In the Matter of California Workers' Justice Coalition Sponsored by Service Employees International Union Local 1021 and Ramses Teón-Nichols; FPPC No. 20/1060.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Calendar. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz, seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion passed 4-0.

6. Motion to Vacate Default Decision and Order, In the Matter of Damian Morgan; FPPC No. 22/075.

General Counsel Dave Bainbridge presented the item.

Chair Silver stated that he was looking for good cause in the respondent's motion, namely the number of contacts, how the respondent responded to those contacts, and whether the respondent had a valid reason for not responding. The Enforcement Division contacted this respondent 14 times over three years. Chair Silver stated that the individual also received contacts from a local filing officer. There was very little response and Form 700s were only filed after the default. Chair Silver stated that he was sympathetic to some of the concerns raised, including medical issues that may constitute good cause.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Respondent Damian Morgan stated that he was a public official in an underserved community. He stated that he took one hundred percent responsibility for not responding and that he was in contact with local and FPPC officials. He stated that he was not educated on the political process and seriousness of filings. He stated that he had a medical issue due to living conditions.

Commissioner Ortiz thanked the respondent for their community involvement but emphasized the responsibility borne by public officials and stated that the repeated contacts were effective education on filings.

Commissioner Wilson asked how many hours staff spent on this item. Ms. Brereton responded that the entire default process took hundreds of hours.

Commissioner Brant stated that he could not support the motion.

Chair Silver noted that granting the motion would move the item back into the Enforcement Division and potentially to a hearing or settlement. Granting the motion would not erase fines.

Chair Silver asked for an explanation of FPPC procedure in aiding respondents throughout the collections process. Mr. Bainbridge responded that fines may be reduced during the collections process with a focus on collecting debts levied. Those in the collection process can contact Executive Director Galena West.

MOTION: To deny the motion to Vacate Default Decision and Order. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz, seconded by Chair Silver. The motion passed 4-0.

7. Prenotice Discussion of Proposed Amendments to Regulation 18404.1, Terminating and Reopening Committees.

General Counsel Dave Bainbridge stated that the Legal Division would like to pull this item based on upcoming information that may alter the regulation.

Chair Silver stated that he had contacted the California Political Attorneys Association to solicit feedback.

8. Legislative Update.

Senior FPPC Legislative Counsel Lindsey Nakano presented the item.

AB 359 (Ramos) Extend Contracting Authority

Commissioner Wilson asked how many local governments the FPPC currently contracts with. Director West responded that there was one active contract with the City of San Bernadino.

Commissioner Brandt asked how the committee voted on the three Commission-sponsored bills. Ms. Nakano responded that all passed unanimously.

Chair Silver noted that Senate Elections Chair Cervantes sought out a member of the other party to join her as a co-sponsor, which the Commission appreciated.

SB 644 (Blakespear) Extend Political Contribution Limits

Chair Silver asked Director West to expand on the costs this bill would impose on the agency. Director West expressed concern that since the Commission would need significant funding to fully implement the legislation, the bill may not be fully funded because of the current fiscal condition of the state budget.

Chair Silver stated that he supported the merits of the bill but his concern over the fiscal impact on the agency outweighed that support.

SB 458 (Niello and Umberg) Ballot Measures, Title Summaries, and Financial Impact Estimates

Commissioner Wilson asked which groups were in support of the bill. Ms. Nakano responded that California Common Cause, Folsom Chamber of Commerce, and League of Women Voters were in support.

Commissioner Wilson asked for the rationale behind changing the author of titles and summaries. Ms. Nakano responded that the stated purpose was to remove biases.

Commissioner Ortiz noted that this bill had been introduced multiple times over the years.

9. Executive Staff Reports.

Ms. Brereton and Mr. Burton presented the Enforcement Division staff report.

Commissioner Ortiz asked for an explanation on differing fines in stipulations. Mr. Burton responded that many counts qualify to receive a warning letter in streamline regulations, lowering fines. Commissioner Ortiz expressed that she wanted to make sure the Enforcement Division was applying criteria consistently.

Chair Silver asked whether one case relating to a general-purpose committee and one case relating to a winning campaign committee would have influenced the stipulation outcomes. Mr. Burton responded that candidate success was a criterion considered by streamline regulations.

Commissioner Wilson asked if mass mailing at public expense could be a streamline case. Mr. Burton responded that it could not.

Commissioner Wilson asked whether mass mailing fines are paid by the city or individuals. Mr. Burton responded that they were paid by the city.

Director West directed Commissioners to regulations detailing streamline requirements.

Chair Silver highlighted the Enforcement Division's success in eliminating the historical case backlog. Commissioner Wilson agreed.

Chief of Audits and Assistant Shrdha Shah presented the Audits and Assistance Division report as submitted.

Mr. Bainbridge presented the Legal Division report as submitted.

Chief of Administration and Technology Dr. Jue Wang presented the Administration and Technology Division report as submitted.

Chair Silver asked for updates regarding Statements of Economic Interest. Dr. Wang responded that the SEI team was reaching out to non-filers.

Chair Silver asked for budgetary updates. Dr. Wang responded that they were waiting for the June 15 signing of the budget.

Commissioner Wilson asked the staff to include budget concerns when considering whether the Commission will support legislation.

10. Commissioner Comments and Proposed Future Agenda Items.

Chair Silver highlighted last month's panel, "Detecting Artificial Intelligence in Campaign Advertisements" hosted by the Public Outreach and Technology Committee.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz, seconded by Chair Silver. The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eva Hartman
Executive Fellow
Approved June X, 2025

Adam E. Silver, Chair
Fair Political Practices Commission