



COUNTY of VENTURA

Board of Supervisors

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by Chair Carmen Ramirez and Supervisor Linda Parks

VENTURA, CA (March 16, 2022) - After a Board of Supervisors closed session on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, the County Executive Officer was placed on immediate administrative leave. An investigation had been conducted related to an employee's complaint alleging inappropriate conduct by the County Executive Officer. The investigation report was prepared by an independent, impartial attorney investigator retained by County Counsel. Though a recent article by a media outlet noted they received the report and it was a draft, the article failed to state that the report was a confidential document protected by attorney work product and attorney client privileges under the law. The media outlet was not authorized to receive the report. The article mentioned there would be another closed session meeting about the issue. However, the County Executive Officer resigned two days later, precluding the Board of Supervisors from taking any further action regarding his employment.

Chair of the Board of Supervisors Carmen Ramirez states that, "Our first concern is for victims. We are committed to ensuring a safe and respectful workplace. And that is why we feel it is necessary to speak out now. Our County will not tolerate abuses of power, including any inappropriate behavior, sexual or otherwise, by our employees, including the use of derogatory names."

Ventura County is committed to protecting victims who come forward and will treat accusations fairly, with a timely, thorough, and objective investigation that respects the rights of both victims and the accused. Once a complete review is conducted, the County will take appropriate action to ensure County employees receive respect and their legal right to a safe workplace.

Supervisor Linda Parks stated victims and witnesses who speak out will be supported, "Employees need not fear losing their jobs. We will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other inappropriate actions. We have your back."

While the County aspires to ensure the privacy of victims and witnesses who come forward, unfortunately, the release of the draft investigative report to the media outlet was an unauthorized release of the confidential, privileged report. This unauthorized action is being addressed.

Chair Ramirez stated that, "It is our responsibility and essential that we respect the privacy of victims and witnesses and to be fair to the accused in accordance with the law, and that we take appropriate action to ensure those rights for the sake of good government."

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