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**OFFICE OF  
THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**  
**SUMMER STEPHAN  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**DWAIN D. WOODLEY**  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

July 24, 2023

Andrew Strong, Executive Director  
County of San Diego, Leon L. Williams  
Human Relations Commission, Chair

Dear Executive Director Andrew Strong:

I recently had the opportunity to review the video of the July 18, 2023, meeting, specifically the comments made by a recently appointed commissioner to the Human Relations Commission at around the 50–55-minute mark into the meeting. The tape shows another commissioner talking to me at the same time as the remarks were being made which interrupted my ability to fully hear the remarks. I became alerted to that whatever the commissioner was saying was hurtful because of the reaction on some faces in the audience. By pulling the recording and listening to it, it appears the commissioner was quoting and opining about a passage from the Old Testament in a manner that was disparaging and dehumanizing to an entire segment of our community. After 3 years of serving on the County of San Diego Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission, I have decided to suspend my attendance until further notice. I had considered suspending my attendance in 2022 after another Commissioner made hurtful remarks towards another segment of our community. However, the Commission took steps to have a code of conduct and to work diligently on educating the commission members and so I continued my attendance in hopes that a positive change will result. Unfortunately, that has not been the case with this latest incident.

On May 19, 2020, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors established the San Diego County Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission to promote positive human relations, respect and the integrity of every individual in San Diego County. Although well intended, the Board action placed the District Attorney as a voting member of the Commission serving as a commissioner. The creation of this permanent seat for the DA did not foresee unfortunate incidents that create a direct conflict with my duties to all the communities my office and I serve as District Attorney.

As the elected District Attorney of San Diego County, I take my duty to pursue equal and fair justice for the 3.3 million residents of San Diego County very seriously and it has turned out that my role as a commissioner places me in a position that is contradictory with the oath I swore to carry out. Unfortunately, this most recent event is not isolated and only adds to unrelated conflicts that exist with prosecutorial and investigative work carried out by my office. As an example, I have prioritized the prosecution of hate crimes tripling our rate of prosecution to include successful prosecutions of defendants who commit crimes motivated by hate against our African American/Black community, Jewish Community, Muslim Community, LGBTQ community,

Hispanic Community, Asian Community and many more. In addition to prosecution, my office pursues prevention education where we repeatedly teach that while words are mostly protected by the First Amendment, but words that are hate filled are often precursors to hate crimes and could encourage others to act violently.

At this time, I must prioritize my responsibility to all communities as their District Attorney that believes everyone must live with dignity and with safety here in our beloved county. I refuse to compromise my commitment to my oath of office. I hope that there is a permanent solution that allows the community to heal and the commission to carry out the mission it was entrusted to do which is to promote positive human relations, respect, and integrity. I want to be clear that I appreciate many of the hard working and ethical commissioners trying to do the best they can to improve the commission and to improve our community. For me, my duty as District Attorney to protect everyone from hate and crime is paramount.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Summer Stephan".

**SUMMER STEPHAN**

San Diego County District Attorney

Cc: Ellen Nash, County of San Diego Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission, Chair  
Eleanor Evans, County of San Diego Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission, Vice Chair  
Estela De Los Rios, County of San Diego Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission, Vice Chair  
Chairwoman Nora Vargas, San Diego County Supervisor, District 1  
Joel Anderson, San Diego County Supervisor, District 2