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Happy New Year!

San Diego County South Bay Companies tried to Claim Wining, Dining, was Free Speech

Judge Rejects Contractors' Meal Gambits

Dec. 14, 2014 | By Greg Moran | www.utsandiego.com

EXCERPT: The fancy meals, trips, and gifts given to South Bay school officials by two construction companies vying for school building contracts were criminal acts and not constitutionally protected free speech, a San Diego judge has concluded.

The ruling on Friday (12/12/14) by Judge Eddie Sturgeon came in a high-stakes case filed by Sweetwater Union High School District against construction companies Gilbane and The Seville Group. The district is seeking the return of millions of dollars paid to the companies, contending the contracts were tainted by findings of conflict of interests among school officials.

State law says when public officials enter into a contract in which they have a financial interest, the deal is void - and any money paid out has to be returned. The district is seeking the return of \$26 million.

The conflicts came to light after U-T Watchdog began reporting on the relationships between contractors and officials at the Sweetwater Union High School District and Southwestern College.

The stories spurred a sweeping investigation by District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, which ended up with 18 contractors, school board members and officials eventually pleading guilty to a variety of charges.

In defending the lawsuit seeking return of school bond funds, the companies claimed that the gifts weren't bribes. They argued the companies were exercising their free speech rights by "petitioning" government officials. That meant their conduct was shielded by the constitution.

To support that argument, the companies argued that among the 18 guilty pleas, none were for bribery. Instead, most defendants pleaded to failing to properly disclose gifts and benefits they received. ...

... The judge flatly rejected the construction company argument.

To read complete article, please visit:

www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/dec/14/judge-rejects-free-speech-argument-on-meals/

Latest November 2014 Election Results - 113 Bonds for 108 California Educational Districts

Dec. 2, 2014 | By Kevin Dayton | www.CaliforniaPolicyCenter.org

EXCERPT: ... Out of 113 bond measures totaling \$11,775,300,000 (\$11.8 billion) for 108 educational districts, 90 bond measures passed totaling \$9,769,950,000 for 85 educational districts.

This means voters authorized California local educational districts to borrow \$9.8 billion for construction by selling bonds to investors. With interest, these bond measures may end up costing \$20 billion over the next 40-50 years.

www.californiapolicycenter.org/revised-november-2014-election-results-113-bond-measures-for-108-california-local-educational-districts/

California Educational Bond Measures on November 2014 Ballot Election Results - Chart:

www.californiapolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-11-04-Bond-Measure-Election-Results-FINAL.pdf

Fight Over How Bond Money is Spent Ends up in Court Injunction Hearing Continued to Dec. 18

Dec. 6, 2014 | By Team 10 Staff | www.10news.com

EXCERPT: Alpine taxpayers say they have been paying for a new high school for years through Propositions H and U, totaling nearly \$700 million, but have not gotten it as promised. The district says there are not enough students to build another high school.

Alpine Taxpayers for Bond Accountability and the Alpine Union School District filed for injunctive relief to prevent the district from spending any more bond money on construction projects in order to ensure money is left for a new high school. They want \$70 million for the school.

The next court date is Dec. 18. Alpine's attorney said an injunction still is possible if the district fails to come up with a plan to set aside funds. ...

The bond measures, passed by voters in 2004 and 2008, were to upgrade existing facilities and build a new high school in Alpine. ...

Team 10 asked to see the current priority list for the district's bond projects when one could not immediately be found in the district's website, or on the website of the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC)....

... The judge flatly rejected the construction company argument.

To read complete article, please visit:

www.10news.com/news/investigations/fight-over-how-school-bond-money-is-spent-ends-up-in-court

In This Issue

[Judge Rejects Contractors' Meal Gambit](#)

[Bond Measure Election Results](#)

[FBI Seizes LAUSD iPad Documents](#)

[Archived Newsletters](#)

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Feb. 13, 2015, Friday
May 7, 2015, Thursday

CaLBOC Annual Statewide Conference:
May 8, 2015, Friday

Pay to Play in School Bond Measures-What it is and Why it is Wrong
2014CaLBOC PaytoPlay.pdf
Presented by Lori Raineri of Government Financial Strategies, GFS

Mission Statement

To promote school district accountability by improving the training and resources available to California's Proposition 39 School Bond Oversight Committees and educating the state legislature, local school boards and the public about the oversight and reporting powers these Citizens' Bond Oversight Committees (CBOCs) have, and to advocate on a state level, where appropriate, on issues of common concern to all CBOCs.

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[ISSUE 66 - Dec. 4, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 65 - Oct. 21, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 64 - Oct. 7, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 63 - Sept 23, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 62 - Sept 10, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 61 - July 28, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 60 - July 14, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 59 - June 30, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 58 - June 16, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 57 - May 30, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 56 - May 6, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 55 - May 1, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 54 - April 29, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 53 - April 21, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 52 - April 10, 2014](#)

[ISSUE 51 - Dec. 17, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 50 - Nov. 7, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 49 - Oct. 7, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 48 - Sept. 5, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 47 - July 9, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 46 - May 31, 2013](#)

[ISSUE 45 - May 6, 2013](#)

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