

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

The Mission and Purpose of the District Attorney's Office

Welcome and thank you for coming.

In the District Attorney's Office, we have one standard of justice.

The mission of this District Attorney's Office is to vigorously and aggressively pursue justice in a way that is fair and treats everyone equally under the law.

Each and every defendant is treated fairly and prosecuted based upon what he did, not who he is, or who he knows, or how politically powerful or well-connected he is. That is the basic promise that we make to this community – due process and equal treatment under the law for everyone.

We devote considerable resources to prosecuting violent and dangerous criminals including drug traffickers, robbers, rapists, child molesters, gangsters, and murderers. Justice and public safety are critically important to the security and well-being of our residents, and are preconditions for economic vitality and growth.

We also vigorously prosecute economic and white collar crimes including real estate and securities fraud, theft of trade secrets and intellectual property, environmental dumping, and hi-tech stealing.

All of these prosecutions are important.

However, the District Attorney's Office has another unique and critically important purpose – safeguarding the public's trust in the democratic institutions which are the pride and glory of our country. Holding public officials accountable for their misconduct is an essential part of our purpose and mission. In this case, we vigorously pursued justice and the truth, and we did so in a fair and objective way.

Result of Our Investigation

Late last year, after a San Jose Metro newspaper article detailed that Supervisor George Shirakawa had neglected to file a series of campaign disclosure forms, we launched an investigation.

In an Office full of outstanding prosecutors, I selected Assistant District Attorney Karyn-Sinunu Towery, a particularly outstanding prosecutor, to lead the investigation.

In an Office full of outstanding investigators, I selected DA Investigator Mike Brown, a particularly outstanding investigator, to work on the case with Ms. Sinunu-Towery.

This investigation moved very quickly because of our active cooperation and partnership with the Fair Political Practices Commission, their attorney Zachary Norton, their investigator Simon Russell and their analyst Luz Bonetti.

Everyone worked together seamlessly, diligently, and carefully to uncover the truth.

And the truth is the following: this morning, we filed 12 criminal charges against Mr. Shirakawa for the crimes he committed: four felony counts of perjury, one felony count of misappropriation of public money, and seven misdemeanors for failing to file accurate campaign reports.

What Will Now Happen

In response to our filing these charges, Mr. Shirakawa is doing the following: resigning his position as Supervisor effective today, pleading guilty to all 12 charges, stipulating to ten additional counts of violating the Political Reform Act and paying a \$50,000 penalty, and making full restitution to the County. He will be legally barred forever from holding elected office in the State of California.

On March 18, at 1:30 p.m., Mr. Shirakawa will be arraigned on the charges. His attorney has told us that he will plead guilty. A sentencing hearing date will then be set. At the sentencing hearing, we will argue that Mr. Shirakawa should be sent to jail for a substantial period of time, up to one year.

Conclusion

The public makes political contributions, votes and pays taxes with the expectation that their elected officials will work diligently to make this county a better place to live.

By abusing his power and misappropriating public money that had been entrusted to him, Mr. Shirakawa violated both the law and the faith of the residents of Santa Clara County.

Ms. Sinunu-Towery will now describe Mr. Shirakawa's crimes in more detail.

We will then answer questions.