

PRESS ADVISORY

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County Policy Prohibits Political Legacy Building at Taxpayer Expense

SAN BERNARDINO – On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a policy that prohibits the naming buildings or other facilities paid for with County funds after sitting elected officials.

“Elected officials are public servants who serve an important role in directing funds to needed projects, but they should not be allowed to use taxpayer money to build their political legacies by having their names attached to buildings, parks, and other public facilities supported by County funds,” said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who proposed the new naming policy. “The unanimous support this policy received reflects this Board’s desire to work together to restore the public’s trust in County government.”

The policy aligns with Board of Supervisor Chair Josie Gonzales’ proposed reforms. In May she called for disallowing the use of Board Discretionary Funds for sponsorships that draw public recognition of county elected officials.

“As County Supervisors we should allocate taxpayer dollars to projects, programs, and services that directly benefit and support our residents,” said Chair Gonzales. “Supervisor Rutherford’s policy enables us to move forward in a manner that is not self-serving.”

Under the Naming of Facilities and Functions Policy, no facility paid for with any amount of County funds can be named after a sitting elected official at the local, state or federal level. A building funded in whole or in part by the County could be named after an elected official who has been out of office for at least three years

The policy also establishes considerations the County shall follow when naming future buildings and facilities. Those include:

- Identification of the County Department(s) or functions occupying the facility
- Incorporation of the name of San Bernardino County
- Recognized geographic, topographic or historical significance to San Bernardino County
- Families or individuals, other than elected officials, who have donated land or funds (when donation is greater than two-thirds the cost of the facility and has been accepted by the County)
- Individuals who have served the nation, the State of California, or the County of San Bernardino in an exceptional and distinguished manner of major significance

If the County chooses to name a facility after a person or family, the new policy requires a full background investigation to ensure the honoree or honorees are worthy of such an enduring public recognition.

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