



For Immediate Release
Denisse Rodarte 323-314-0418

Monday June 25, 2012

BASTA Says Recent Arrest of Cudahy Officials is Necessary, Calls for More Aggressive Action

BASTA leaders praise federal officials but also call for more aggressive investigations, expedited prosecutions, and stiffer penalties to end a “culture of corruption” in Southeast Los Angeles County

Friday’s arrest of three Cudahy officials including two city councilmembers for allegedly seeking a bribe from the operator of medical marijuana comes as “No Surprise” to local BASTA leaders who have been battling local corruption in the southeast, “It is always bittersweet to see local elected officials arrested but, nonetheless, we need even more aggressive efforts to end the culture of corruption in Southeast Los Angeles,” said BASTA representative Denisse Rodarte.

BASTA representative Dale Walker adds that the awareness that BASTA has fostered in local communities has engendered both hope and frustration among residents, “People are much more aware about the issues of corruption and even bad public policy such as the establishment of unfair water rates. However, they are often frustrated and want more immediate action.”

Walker points to the slow process of justice for the Bell 8. “As Bell residents we see the Bell 8 walking around town and acting like innocent victims. However, the prevailing sentiment is that they are public criminals. To have them arrogantly walking around town simply isn’t good for the psyche of those who want to end corruption.”

As a solution, BASTA leadership is working on a comprehensive reform package that they will present to local legislators. The reforms will include a call for stiffer state penalties for acts such as bribery by local elected officials and making it easier for local cities to sue vendors such as law and audit firms that take part corruption. “The enterprise of stealing from local Bell taxpayers was very similar to an organized criminal enterprise. Federal law allows for a broader prosecution under RICO. We think we need something similar in California,” concluded Rodarte.

Rodarte says that BASTA leadership hopes to work with local legislators to draft reforms that include a call for stiffer state penalties for acts such as bribery by local elected officials, thus making it easier for local cities to sue vendors such as law and audit firms that take part corruption. “The enterprise of stealing from local Bell taxpayers was very similar to an organized criminal enterprise. Federal law allows for a broader prosecution under RICO. We think we need something similar in California in order to make justice easier to obtain,” concluded Rodarte.

BASTA is a coalition of residents of Southeast Los Angeles that are dedicated to assuring transparency, best practices and ethical conduct among local elected officials. All BASTA representatives are unpaid volunteers.

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