



For Immediate Release
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BASTA Leadership Says Allegations Critical of BASTA's Grassroots Foundation Unfounded and Politically Motivated, Stands Behind Coalition Partners and Core Principle of Resign, Recall, Report

Today, the Los Angeles Times published an article questioning BASTA's homegrown foundation and its political motives. We take great exception with those mischaracterizations.

BASTA leadership wants to make clear who we are—BASTA is nearly 2,000 Bell residents who came together two months ago to save our community from an abusive city government. Many of us were born and raised here in Bell. Almost the entire BASTA leadership are long-time residents of Bell, with one key community activist coming from our neighboring city of Bell Gardens. We are all non-paid volunteers who have put in hundreds of hours to help our community. We are a diverse group made up of Latino, Arab, and Anglo families and include everyone from college professors to police officers to factory workers. Without exception, we have all been victimized by the abuses of the Robert Rizzo regime.

One of our coalition partners are the rank-and-file members of the Bell Police Officers Association. They are officers who courageously put their careers on the line to expose the excesses of the Rizzo regime. They too were victims who have chosen to work with us to help reform our city. They have helped underwrite some of the costs involved in running a recall campaign and provided BASTA with the valuable strategic assistance of their public affairs consultant. We have enlisted the help of several of our own paid consultants including a signature gathering professional as well as a research firm to conduct a public survey of Bell residents. Each of those consultants has provided quality advice to BASTA.

When it comes to fiscal transparency, there is no mystery about BASTA's finances. All our expenditures are posted online and anyone can walk into the office and review all of our fiscal records (expenditures, deposits, and donations). If there are services that are not posted online it's simply because the vendors have not yet been paid.

We are proud of our accomplishments to date. The system was broken and our repeated petitioning to the powers-that-be that something was amiss were ignored for months and years. But now, every one of our allegations has been verified—over taxation, egregious compensation of city officials, abuse of power and more. We are hopeful our recall petition campaign will be successful and a new city government based on transparency and good governance can emerge.

Our local city leaders failed us, but what is even more disturbing is that our state leaders were AWOL as well when we needed them. Over the past two years, Bell residents have reached out to Assemblymember Hector De La Torre in letters, phone calls and meetings with his local staff only to hear there was nothing that could be done, that these were city issues and a matter of local control. We find it curious now that the Bell scandal has become a matter of national concern that suddenly Mr. De La Torre is interested in intervening in Bell. In truth, Mr. De La Torre has done little or nothing for Bell residents.

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BASTA
BELL ASSOCIATION TO STOP THE ABUSE



BELL ASOCIACIÓN PARA PARAR EL ABUSO

Finally, we would like to convey our deep appreciation to the Los Angeles Times for the aggressive reporting of Jeff Gottlieb and Ruben Vives concerning the Bell scandal. Every Bell resident owes them a deep sense of gratitude for helping to disclose publically the abuses of the Rizzo regime.

We meet the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 at the 4313 Gage Ave Bell CA 90201. See for yourself who we are. Or visit us on our web site: www.basta4bell.com. BASTA is committed to helping create a new Bell and we reject the old style of small-town politics and smoke screens that led to this scandal. BASTA!

BASTA LEADERSHIP:

Marcos Oliva,
20 Years Bell Resident

Lorenzo Martinez,
35 Years Bell Resident,

Susana Lopez,
Lifelong Bell Resident

Rodrigo Rodarte,
31 Years Bell Resident,

Diane Oliva,
20 Years Bell Resident

Violeta Alvarez,
31 Years Bell Resident

Ali Saleh,
Lifelong Resident

Alicia Romero,
20 Years Bell Resident

Dale Walker,
20 Years Bell Resident

Denisse Rodarte,
Lifelong Bell Resident

Marylou Gonzalez,
28 Years Bell Resident

Mario Estrada,
5 Years Bell Resident

Fidencio Gallardo,
16 Years Bell Resident

Cristina Garcia
Bell Gardens Lifelong Resident