

Los Cerritos Community News – September 29, 2006

4 THE COMMUNITY NEWS • SEPTEMBER 29, 2006

LETTERS & OPINIONS

LETTERS

Democracy At Work In Cerritos

The September 14 Cerritos City Council meeting was a great demonstration that the people of Cerritos are still in control of their city government. Five Cerritos residents took the time to attend the meeting and address the Council to ask them to remove Commissioner Grace Hu from her appointment to the Economic Development Commission for her conflict of interest and personally profiting from decisions she made while she was serving on the Council. One of the speakers was actually speaking on behalf of a dozen residents who could not attend, but signed a petition in favor of removing Grace Hu.

Those in favor of removing Grace Hu were armed with the plea agreement she reached with the state's Department of Corporations that found her guilty of violating the public trust and consequently fined her \$40,000, required her to sell her business to someone who is not a relative of hers, as well as relinquish control of the business for at least one year. Grace Hu's adversaries made the claim that it is incompatible for her to serve in a position of public trust after such serious findings by the California Department of Corporations.

Grace Hu and her supporters were also present at the Council meeting.

Hu's supporters kept beating the drum that the entire effort to remove her from the appointment was motivated by partisan politics because Hu is also the Republican candidate for the state

Assembly from the 56th District. It appears that they believe that once a person declares her candidacy for

office her past history cannot be scrutinized. Would they extend the same courtesy to Tony Mendoza, Hu's opponent, and not scrutinize his past? Hu, for her part, claimed that the findings against her by the Department of Corporations were false, and that the \$40,000 she paid was not a fine, but a "reimbursement" to the Department for their investigative efforts.

After about a half an hour of input from the public, the City Council approved, by a 4-1 margin, a motion to discuss the removal of Grace Hu from the Economic Development Commission after the November 7 election to deny Hu and her supporters the claim of partisan politics. Of the four councilmembers who voted for the motion, two were registered Democrats, and two were registered Republicans. This shows that the effort to remove corruption

from City Hall is neither partisan nor personal. It is an unpleasant task that has to be done.

What is most unfortunate about the entire episode is that it could have been avoided. If Grace Hu's settlement with the Department of Corporations would have been publicized in the Los Cerritos Community News at the time that it was reached in February

2005, she would have never been appointed to the Economic Development Commission in August 2005. I personally found out about Hu's settlement only in the last three months, as I was searching on Google for Hu's campaign website, but found the settlement instead. How unfortunate.

Alon Barlevy, PhD.
Cerritos

Something On Your Mind?...

We encourage response, opinions or concerns you have, and would like to hear from you.

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Letters may be edited for length and grammar.

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not reflect the views of this newspaper.

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Cerritos, CA