

PRESS RELEASE



City moves to dismiss lawsuit as a meritless SLAPP (“Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation”); charges Downey Fire Association of trying to mislead public

Downey, CA, March 11, 2014: City of Downey officials are determined to ensure that voters understand, in simple and clear terms, the consequences of voting for Charter Amendment 14 on the June 3, 2014 ballot. In hard-hitting legal papers filed by the City in court yesterday, the City pointed out that:

- The Downey Fire Association is a co-sponsor of the Charter amendment as part of the Association’s long-standing efforts, dating back to 1997, to require the City to contract for fire services with the Los Angeles County Fire Department.
- The Association has spent over \$124,000 through the end of December 2013 on the measure, including repeatedly threatening lawsuits against the City.
- The ballot title proposed by the Association lawyers would be a “blatant falsehood” and comes on the heels of widespread citizen complaints of fraud in the initiative’s signature gathering process.

City officials also filed a motion to have the case dismissed as a meritless “Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) under the State anti-SLAPP statute and recover the City’s attorney’s fees and costs, estimated at \$150,000 so far. The next hearing in the case is on March 18, 2014 and the City’s anti-SLAPP motion will be heard on May 27, 2014.

Mayor Fernando Vasquez noted: “I am glad that the City Attorney and City Clerk refuse to be intimidated by threats and lawsuits and are committed to telling the voters the truth so that they can exercise their fundamental right to vote.”

Copies of the City’s legal papers will be available on the City’s election website because of public interest in this issue.

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