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Ethics Commission Appoints New Chair and Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2023

SAN DIEGO – Caridad Sánchez has been appointed as the new Chair of the San Diego Ethics Commission, serving a term that runs from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

“I hope our work on the Ethics Commission encourages civic and electoral engagement,” said Chair Sánchez, “while continuing to inspire confidence in our City’s ethics laws.”

Ms. Sánchez is a registered Democrat serving her first four-year term on the Commission. She was appointed to the Commission in 2019.

Ms. Sánchez serves as Chief of Public Affairs for Caltrans District 11, covering San Diego and Imperial Counties. She is the chief public relations, communications and public information and legislative advisor to the District. She also serves as the District’s focal point for providing products and services to the Caltrans External Affairs Division in Sacramento, the California State Transportation Agency, and the Governor’s Office. Previously, she served as the San Diego and Imperial Counties regional Director for U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer.

The new Chair is a Southcrest resident and San Diego native who grew up in Logan and Sherman Heights. She graduated from the University of San Diego with a degree in history and political science.

Ms. Sánchez’s interest in public affairs evolved from her experiences growing up in inner-city neighborhoods. She remembers her mother, a housekeeper, working hard to provide and improve their quality of life. She and her mother, Cristina, actively participated in political campaigns and organized voter registration drives. Through these life experiences, she developed an understanding of and deep commitment to improving her community and country.

Ms. Sánchez succeeds attorney Bill Baber, whose one-year term as the Commission’s Chair ended June 30, 2022. Commissioner Baber, a member of the Common Sense Party who also serves on the La Mesa City Council, has been an Ethics Commissioner since 2015.

Mr. Baber will continue serving as a Commissioner until his second term expires on June 30, 2023.

"It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of the Ethics Commission this past year," said Baber. "Our staff is fantastic. This Commission is dedicated to ensuring the City's government serves the people with honesty, integrity, and transparency. You can't have a functioning democracy without prioritizing ethics."

Attorney Paul Cooper was elected to serve as the Commission's vice chair. Vice Chair Cooper is not registered with a political party but is registered as Decline to State. He was appointed to his first four-year term on the Commission in 2021.

"I look forward to working with newly appointed Ethics Commission Chair Caridad Sánchez, my fellow Commissioners, as well as staff in my new role as Vice Chair," said Cooper. "I am honored to serve on the Ethics Commission and participate in the important work it does."

Mr. Cooper is the Vice President and General Counsel of the RMD Group. Prior to that he was with the Office of the San Diego City Attorney for more than 23 years. He retired from the City of San Diego in May 2017 as the Executive Assistant City Attorney. Mr. Cooper began his career in the Office of the City Attorney as a prosecutor and was eventually promoted to Head Deputy City Attorney overseeing the office's nationally recognized Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Unit. He also served as Senior Legal Advisor to the San Diego Police Department and spent nearly a decade as Counsel to then-Chief of Police, William Lansdowne.

In 2002, Mr. Cooper successfully argued a case before the California Supreme Court on behalf of the City. He graduated from BYU with a B.A. in Political Science, then received a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Southern California, and then graduated from J. Reuben Clark School of Law (BYU) with honors, Cum Laude.

Departing Chair Baber served as Chair of the Ethics Commission from 2021 to 2022. He is an attorney with an emphasis on political law and governmental ethics. He has served as treasurer for dozens of federal, state, and local candidates and committees. He is a former Analyst for the Federal Election Commission and previously served in numerous roles at San Diego City Hall. He also spent 11 years as a member of the La Mesa-Spring Valley School Board. In 2014, he was elected to the La Mesa City Council. Mr. Baber is a graduate of the University of Southern California and the California Western School of Law.

The Ethics Commission is an independent City entity that is dedicated to monitoring, enforcing and reforming the City's ethics laws. The Commission has jurisdiction over City laws regarding ethics, campaign finance, and lobbying. Commission staff provide the regulated community with education and advice regarding ethics laws, conduct investigations, audit City campaign committees, and work on reform of City laws.