



Ethics
Commission

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City of San Diego Sees Dramatic Increase in Behested Payments During 2020

FPPC REPORTS RELEASED TODAY DETAIL PAYMENTS MADE AT THE BEHEST OF STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS FROM 2015 TO 2020

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego saw more than a 300% percent increase in the number of payments made at the behest of its elected officials during 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to 2019, following a statewide trend.

Nearly all of the local payments reported were made by entities at the behest of former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, according to reports issued today by the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). Mayor Faulconer also had one of the highest personal totals of “behested payments” among the state’s local officials in five of the six years studied.

In 2020, \$1,600,528 was contributed at the behest of a City of San Diego official. This was the highest total for the City of San Diego reported over the six years studied by the FPPC. Of that amount, \$1,466,528 in payments were made at the behest of former Mayor Faulconer, according to the reports.

The FPPC analyzed “behested payments” made at the request of state and local officials between 2015 and 2020.

The FPPC’s press release and reports on state and local behested payment activity are available here: <https://www.fppc.ca.gov/media/press-releases/2022-news-releases/FPPC-News-Release-behested-payment-reports.html>

Behested payments are, as stated by the FPPC in its press release today, “payments made at the behest of an elected official that are not campaign contributions or gifts to the official, but are made principally for charitable, legislative, or governmental purposes. An example would be an elected official asking a company, group or individual to donate to a local non-profit agency, charity, food bank or local health fair.”

Local officials are required to report the source of such payments once they have cumulatively donated at least \$5,000 at the official's request within a calendar year.

The San Diego Ethics Commission tracks and monitors behested payments at the local level. It also enforces violations by City of San Diego officials.

“Behested payment reports provide significant transparency regarding an official’s efforts to raise funds for charitable, legislative or governmental purposes,” said Ethics Commission Executive Director Sharon Spivak. “The public benefits from seeing reports of who is providing such funding at an official’s behest.”

The total amount of payments made at the behest of a City of San Diego elected official from 2015 to 2020 was \$5,253,779. This amount was the fifth-highest total for a local jurisdiction during the six years studied. San Diego’s overall total was far below the total amount of payments made at the behest of local officials from 2015 to 2020 in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento.

According to the FPPC reports, the top five local behesting jurisdictions are Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego.

The total amount of behested payments reported by City of San Diego officials between 2015 and 2020 was:

2015: \$182,500
2016: \$1,042,110
2017: \$1,372,407
2018: \$550,439
2019: \$505,795
2020: \$1,600,528

For more information, please see the FPPC link above.

The San Diego Ethics Commission provides training to all of the City of San Diego’s elected officials regarding the reporting and tracking of behested payments. The Ethics Commission monitors officials’ filed reports, advises officials as related questions arise, and enforces violations by City of San Diego officials.

More information on behested payments may be found on the Ethics Commission’s website at <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/behested.pdf>

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