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Please reply to the Westlake Village Location

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### **Press Release**

For Immediate Release

## **INTERIM CHIEF BOSTIC CONSPIRES TO VIOLATE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT BY MANUFACTURING EVIDENCE AND ENGAGING IN WITNESS INTIMIDATION**

Westlake Village, CA-Adams, Ferrone & Ferrone (AFF), Southern California's industry leader in the representation of public safety associations and their officers, announces the filing of a federal lawsuit against Calexico's interim Chief of Police, Michael Bostic, its interim City Manager, Richard Warne, Police Lieutenant, Gonzalo Gerardo, and City Council Member Maritza Hurtado. The lawsuit was filed today, in the United States District Court, for the Southern District of California, located in San Diego, California, on behalf of 9 plaintiffs—7 wrongfully terminated officers and 2 individuals who have been subject to retaliation.

The lawsuit alleges corruption at virtually every level of the government, with these defendants stopping at nothing to root out and manufacture frivolous allegations against union leadership simply because they were vocal, spoke out on matters of public concern, and engaged in their Constitutionally-protected rights, such as openly campaigning against Hurtado. Despite Bostic's initial pronouncement that there was wide-spread corruption in the Police Department when he took over, he proceeded to terminate 7 officers (6 of whom held union leadership positions) based not on corruption, but rather based on innocuous errors and other common mistakes that most other officers had made. To date, not one of Bostic's predictions about corruption by his police officers has materialized.

The lawsuit, which was already in the works, took on new life last week as Joel Bielma, a Police Commissioner for the City of Calexico, blew the whistle on the defendants, bringing forth direct evidence of their illegal actions. Bielma, who has also been the target of threats and retaliation in order to keep him quiet about what he knows, finally had enough when he realized the extent to which the defendants were violating the law.

Bielma reports firsthand knowledge about Hurtado's involvement in soliciting complaints against police union leadership and assisting individuals with the crafting of complaints against them. He reports how she improperly injected herself into the process to see to it that the individuals she did not like were terminated and that their terminations would be upheld at any cost. She did this, despite the fact that she, as a City Council Member, would ultimately be involved in the decision-making process with regard to any discipline the officers received.

Further, Bielma reports that Bostic and Gerardo, likely with the other defendants, concocted an illegal scheme to threaten a witness officer to lie, under oath in administrative, civil and criminal proceedings, to say things that

weren't true for the express purpose of supporting the defendants' attempts to frivolously terminate the plaintiffs and to obtain a criminal prosecution against the Plaintiffs. Bostic and Gerardo unequivocally threatened this officer that if he didn't say the untrue things that they wanted him to say, then he too would be terminated. Bostic and Gerardo saw fit to conceal their illegal plot by keeping the officer in the field working, while any other officer under similar circumstances, would have been placed on paid administrative leave. These actions violate numerous state and federal civil and criminal statutes, and are subject to prosecution as a felony.

The actions alleged in the lawsuit reveal that the defendants have gone to great lengths, violating state and federal law civil and criminal laws, all for the express purpose of exacting revenge. Hurtado's revenge is predicated on eliminating individuals who crossed her during her election, while Bostic and Warne's revenge is predicated on securing enormous and excessive employment contracts from the City in exchange for carrying out Hurtado's wishes. The lawsuit demands a jury trial. No dates have yet been set.

For information on this release, or to request a copy of the lawsuit with the written complaint of Joe Bielma, please contact the handling attorney: Michael A. McGill, Esq. (213) 200-6114.

**ADAMS, FERRONE & FERRONE (AFF)** serves as general counsel to over 100 public safety associations and is the largest firm in Southern California specializing exclusively in the representation of police, corrections and fire in labor & contract negotiations, disciplinary investigations, critical incidents, criminal defense, workers' compensation, personal injury litigation, employment litigation and disability retirement law.

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