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Supervisor William

As an 18 year employee of San Diego County I have seen many different Boards of Supervisors, as members come and go. Some of the Boards acted responsibly, while some Boards acted otherwise. Early this week I returned home from a brief vacation and learned that the present Board of Supervisors, within the span of only a few days, made two widely divergent decisions.

1. Deciding to hire David Janssen as CAO
2. Giving $68,000.00 to departing CAO Norman Hickey

The hiring of David Janssen as CAO is one of the best decisions of any board in recent history. Conversely however, the $68,000.00 gift to the departing CAO has to be one of the dumbest decisions of all time. To put things into perspective, my calling this decision dumb is akin to Noah saying "It looks like rain". How anyone with first-hand knowledge of the Countys' financial condition could take such an action is literally beyond belief.

This is the same Board who asked County employees to take 40 hours voluntary time off (VTO) without pay to help in the current financial crisis. In my department we have 84 percent VTO participation. Among the participants are single parents, working in the lowest paid clerical positions, who literally live from paycheck to paycheck when any extra expense of only a few dollars must be carefully considered.

These same employees are doing extra work because of the freeze on filling vacant positions. It should be noted the $68,000.00 "gift" to Mr. Hickey would pay the starting salary of FOUR clerk typists for ONE FULL YEAR.

Another disturbing factor in this matter is the Board chairmans' reaction to the widespread criticism of this action. He was quoted as saying "We weren't doing anything illegal."

Well, Mr. Bailey and other Board members, just because something is legal does not make it right. Failure to provide responsible leadership during a period of financial crisis is indefensible.

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