

# Waste, fraud and abuse at Los Angeles Animal Services

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FROM: ERIC GARCETTI: BLOGSPOT.COM

Exposing the bullshit at LAAS during the administration of Mayor Eric Garcetti.

FOR: 16-0114

Monday, June 8, 2015

Blog Archive

DANIEL GUSS

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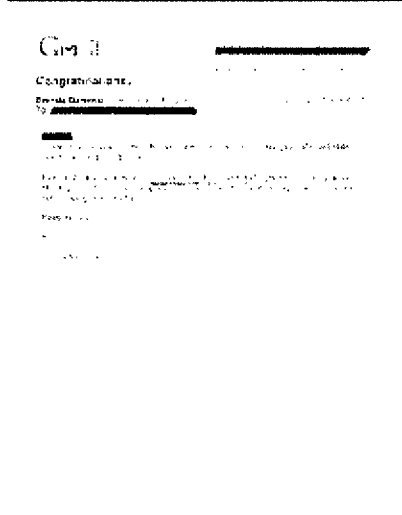
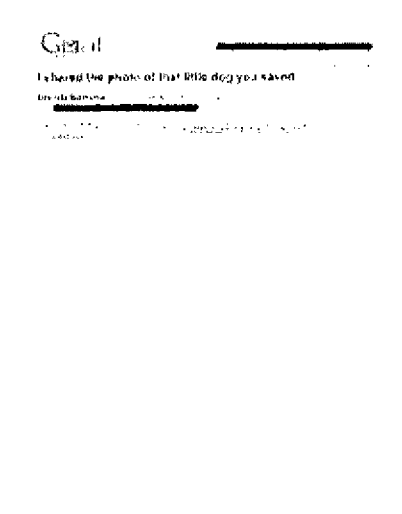
How Mayor Garcetti's animal shelter GM personally ...

## How Mayor Garcetti's animal shelter GM personally misappropriated low income discounts

When is \$218,258.64 considered low income?

Brenda Barnette, the general manager of Los Angeles Animal Services, the city's shelter system, is paid this much to run the city's six shelters for Mayor Eric Garcetti. But she, along with Pamela Chavez-Hutson, her long-term, live-in domestic partner also get low income discounts from the LA Department of Water & Power and - wait for it - LA Animal Services.

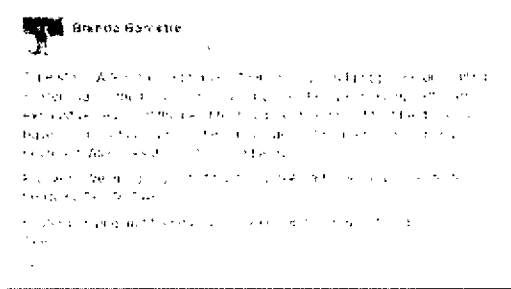
"We have lived together for 2+ years" and "are domestic partners for insurance" is how Barnette described their relationship in 1/9/15 and 2/10/15 emails.



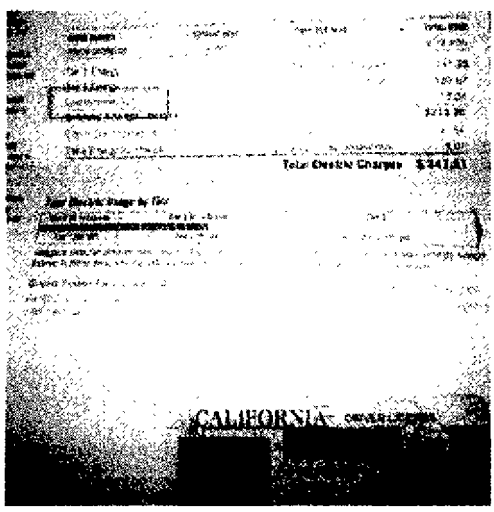
Date: 2/17/16  
Submitted in: PAW Committee  
Council File No: 16-0114  
Item No: 9  
Deputy: Adam R. Lid

- Virtual real estate photos of Barnette's former home in Atwater Village, which sold in November, confirm that it was vacant during most of its 18 months on the market.

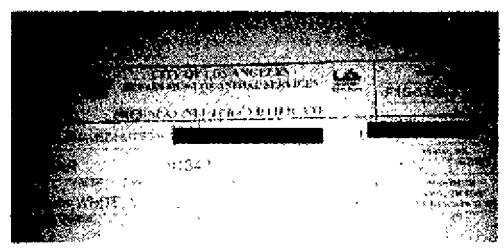
According to Barnette's Facebook page, Barnette and Chavez-Hutson were living in Chavez-Hutson's Sylmar house last November when, she says, a small dog wandered into their living room overnight.



On November 7th, Chavez-Hutson took her Department of Water & Power bill, with its low income discount, and went to the East Valley Shelter (which is one of the shelters Barnette oversees) and demanded the higher value \$70 spay/neuter voucher reserved for "very low income" households. Chavez-Hutson declared that she is Barnette's domestic partner, and told the supervisor who was summoned, to call Barnette to confirm her eligibility for the "very low income" voucher.



When the supervisor and Chavez-Hutson emerged from an office a few minutes later, the clerk issued Chavez-Hutson this voucher from the "very low income" spay/neuter program.

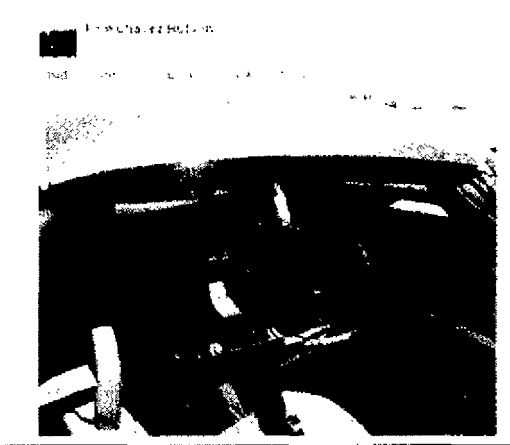


But according to the LADWP's website, a two-person household can only get its low-income discount if the combined household income is under \$31,460, which is "for the (program) participants' permanent, primary residence." Not counting Chavez's income, Barnette's salary was already north of \$218,000, or 694% higher than the low-income threshold. And Chavez-Hutson did not qualify for a senior or disabled discount, because it "is based solely on...income."

Since Barnette's house had long-since been vacant, and Barnette stated that she and Chavez-Hutson have "lived together for 2+ years," she had to have known that the LADWP discount

was bogus, and could therefore not be used to qualify for the very low income spay/neuter discount.

The DWP further states that its low income discount is for those who "are experiencing difficulties paying their bills." But according to Chavez-Hutson's Facebook page, just a few months earlier, she purchased a new Mazda Miata MX-5.



According to the LA Animal Services website, Chavez-Hutson didn't qualify for its discount either because the combined two-person household income must be less than \$34,200, and that the person receiving the voucher "must be the dog's owner" and "cannot be used for feral cats or stray dogs."

1. Chavez-Hutson was not the dog's owner
2. The dog was a stray
3. Their household income didn't meet the "very low income" requirements.

Strike 1. Strike 2. Strike 3.

When Barnette's administrative assistant was contacted recently about a phantom, mirror-image situation, she cited city code 53.90 and stated that the dog must be turned over to the shelter "because he may have an owner looking for him." To date, Barnette and Chavez-Hutson didn't turn over the dog to the shelter, and there is no proof that his photo was posted in the East Valley Shelter.

At the March meeting of the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council, Barnette (who was speaking that night) was asked by a panelist whether people who grossly inflate their household income to take advantage of low income discounts should be prosecuted, she said that those matters "should be referred to the City Attorney's office."

It has already been referred to City Controller Ron Galperin.

Galperin is rumored to be in "pre-audit" mode of LAAS for waste, fraud and abuse on a much grander scale. If he examines Barnette's city cellular, office phone and home utility records, he may be able to determine why Barnette was a virtual no-show in her office from 2013-14, since Sylmar is a lot further away from downtown than is Atwater Village, and whether she was working & living out of Chavez-Hutson's home for most or all of that time. It sounds like one heck of a telecommute/no-show paycheck. (NOTE: Barnette didn't start regularly appearing in her downtown office again until the huge 2014 inferno across the street from it forced her to move back into City Hall, where it is a lot tougher to be a no-show raking in \$218,258.64).

Barnette is paid handsomely to enforce the city's laws. But she, and her domestic partner, must also live by them like everyone else, or pay the price for breaking them.

Coming soon: How LAAS falsified at least 8,807 pet adoptions, and knowingly misused those inflated statistics to solicit millions of dollars in donations.

Posted by Dan G. at 3:50 PM



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Labels: Brenda Barnette, Eric Garcetti, LA Animal Services, LADWP, Los Angeles City Council, Pamela Chavez-