

MOTION

RULES, ELECTIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Charter Sec. 271(a) states that the City Attorney shall represent the City in all legal proceedings against the City of Los Angeles (the "City"). Additionally, Charter Sec. 272(a) states that "[t]he [LA City] Council shall make client decisions in litigation involving matters over which the Charter gives the Council responsibility.

The City Attorney represented the City in Superior Court Case Paper, Stephen, and Richard v. City of Los Angeles, No. 24VECV03899, hereinafter referred to as the "Paper Brothers Lawsuit," and Council was effectively the City Attorney's client ("Client").

According to the California Rule 3.4 of Professional Conduct forbids lawyers from interfering with any party's orderly access to a witness testimony.

On September 5, 2025, Plaintiff's Attorney filed a declaration (see "Attachment A") that the City Attorney attempted to solicit a campaign donation from a testifying expert in violation of California Rule of Professional Conduct.

Per California Rule 1.4 of Professional Conduct which govern the ethics of lawyering states in:

(a) A lawyer shall:

(1) promptly inform the client of any decision or circumstance with respect to which disclosure or the client's informed consent* is required by these rules or the State Bar Act;

(2) reasonably* consult with the client about the means by which to accomplish the client's objectives in the representation;

(3) keep the client reasonably* informed about significant developments relating to the representation, including promptly complying with reasonable* requests for information and copies of significant documents when necessary to keep the client so informed; and

(4) advise the client about any relevant limitation on the lawyer's conduct when the lawyer knows* that the client expects assistance not permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably* necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

(c) A lawyer may delay transmission of information to a client if the lawyer reasonably believes* that the client would be likely to react in a way that may cause imminent harm to the client or others.

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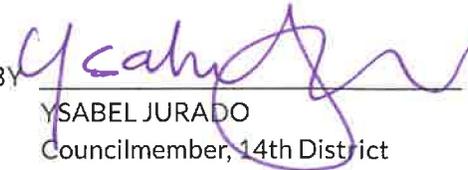
(d) A lawyer's obligation under this rule to provide information and documents is subject to any applicable protective order, non-disclosure agreement, or limitation under statutory or decisional law.

The City Attorney failed to brief her Client regarding the ethics breach violation when providing advice to her Client regarding settlement negotiations. Additionally, the City Attorney settled the case, shortly after the declaration of an ethics breach, for \$18 million -- an amount which is considered one of the City's most expensive lawsuit settlements over the past few years at a time when the City is facing a fiscal crisis driven largely by sharply rising legal payout.

The ethics breach was made aware to the Client on December 11, 2025, when a news outlet reported that the City Attorney was accused of an ethics breach. The City Attorney's duty to inform her Client under the California Rules 1.4 and 3.4 of Professional Conduct appear to have been breached.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council REQUEST the City Attorney report to Council in Closed session within 45 days regarding the ethics breach violation, and give updates to the City Council.

PRESENTED BY


YSABEL JURADO
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY



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