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Resolution Reached In Improper Use Of County Resources Investigation *DA Investigation #4765267 Regarding Christian Romo*

(Bakersfield, CA) Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced today that a resolution has been reached relating to a Public Integrity Unit Investigation into the improper use of Kern County resources initially raised at a Board of Supervisors meeting on October 8, 2024.

The Kern County District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit has concluded its investigation into concerns that were raised at a Kern County Board of Supervisors meeting on October 8, 2024. In that meeting, it was alleged that on August 19th, 2024, Christian Romo participated in a political media interview remotely from his Kern County office and additionally engaged in holding a virtual meeting of the Kern County Democratic Central Committee remotely from his County office on August 27, 2024. Mr. Romo's office is located in the Kern County Administrative Building and is within the offices designated for the 5th District Supervisor and her staff. Supporting documents and exhibits were provided to Members of the Board in support of the claim. In the absence of any reported administrative action being taken in response to the allegations, the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit investigated the issue to determine whether there was any truth to the allegations, and if so, an appropriate remedy.

On July 9, 2025, the District Attorney announced the result of the investigation, as well as the resolution reached with Mr. Romo. The investigation found evidence of four political meetings with the Kern County Democratic Central Committee and one political interview, all of which were conducted in 2024, and all of which were conducted by Mr. Romo on his county-issued computer, in his county office that was within the offices assigned to 5th District Supervisor Perez. Both state law and county ordinances prohibit local officers and employees from using government resources for political gain, which is why the issue was properly investigated by the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit.

The resolution reached with Mr. Romo included a specific acknowledgment that he did engage in those meetings, and that they were conducted with the use of county supplies and on county property. In the post-covid era, political figures and staffers may have become so accustomed to the ease of remote meetings and interviews that proper consideration is not given to whether government resources are being used to facilitate and conduct purely political meetings. Fortunately, the meetings conducted in the investigation did not result in any substantial loss to the County. The meetings, for example, did not take

place during county work hours, and the use of county equipment and property did not result in any substantial cost or loss to the county.

The combination of lack of substantial cost to the county, Mr. Romo's lack of any criminal history, Mr. Romo's voluntary participation in the investigation, and Mr. Romo's willingness to accept accountability for what occurred resulted in a forward-looking disposition that seeks to prevent this issue from recurring. In addition to acknowledging that he engaged in the 5 incidents, Mr. Romo further agreed to and has successfully completed training established by the Fair Political Practices Commission and Department of Justice that specifically addresses the very violations identified in this case and advises on the law surrounding these issues and how to properly ensure that government resources are not used for political purposes. Mr. Romo further abided with a requirement that no new law violations be committed through July 7, 2025. As Mr. Romo completed all requirements asked of him as a condition of the diversionary resolution of the case, on July 7, 2025, the District Attorney announced that the investigation has been completed and that no further action will be taken as a result of the investigation.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the investigation and resolution, stating "Mr. Romo should not have used county resources for political purposes, but his lack of criminal history, willingness to accept accountability, and lack of any substantial harm to the county all favored a resolution that ensured violations would cease without civil or criminal litigation. Investigators of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit are tasked with ensuring that public figures, including county employees, operate within the ethical and legal boundaries established for positions requiring the public's trust, and their work in this investigation provided evidence allowing remediation of the conduct before it could create more substantial harm."