

STATEMENT FROM HON. DEANN SALCIDO

September 23, 2010

It is my honor and privilege to serve as a Superior Court judge in San Diego County, a position I have held since 2002. I have devoted years of my life to the diligent pursuit of justice, and the rehabilitation of criminal offenders. I have worked first and foremost to enforce the law and protect the victims, but also to help willing offenders change their lives, particularly through my collaborative court assignments such as Domestic Violence Review Hearings, the Proposition 36 Program, and the Drug Court Program. For me, the job is about bettering the community at large with the judicial tools given to me. Most recently, as has been widely publicized, I filed a writ for an order requiring San Diego judges to follow existing mandatory terms of probation. Designed to protect the public, these terms of probation include firearms prohibitions, stay-away orders, and a mandatory one-year course on domestic violence prevention techniques.

The Commission on Judicial Performance has recently chosen the path of charging and trying me, in large part for my demeanor on the bench—38 instances out of an estimated 12,000 court appearances assigned to me during the past 18 months. While I acknowledge that my style is different than that traditionally expected of judges, I believe that it is an effective way to accomplish the important goals of my service. I truly believe the results speak for themselves.

I have found the use of humor and a “tough love” approach to be very successful in getting through to the criminal defendants and helping them see the benefits of cleaning up their lives. I believe the time is now ripe for our judicial system to begin examining whether the traditional demeanor and approach of the judiciary is the best means for accomplishing justice, particularly in a rapidly changing world with a culturally diverse population.

Though the charges do not reflect it, I have openly acknowledged to the Commission from the beginning that I erred in judgment in making a handful of comments from the bench. Additionally, I have always taken responsibility for misinterpreting the statute in the Chadira Gipson matter, referenced in the Commission’s Notice of Formal Proceedings. Like all judicial officers, I am constantly learning and adapting, and have made a commitment to the Commission to do my best to learn from my mistakes. No judge is perfect, but everything I have said and done on the bench has been for the purpose of advancing the goal of stopping the cycle of crime in accordance with the law. I believe the interests of the public have been well-served, and will continue to be well-served, by my continued public service.

I thank the San Diego community for the opportunity to serve as a judicial officer, and reiterate my commitment to serving the public and effectuating positive change.