

STEPHEN WHITBURN FOR SUPERVISOR

Whitburn Statement on Amended Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant Request for Life Perspectives

September 14, 2010

My name is Stephen Whitburn and I am here today to urge you to vote against Mr. Horn's amended Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant request for Life Perspectives. The original grant request was rejected by County Counsel, and rightly so, since fundraisers for religious groups should not be funded with the taxpayer's money. And now, suspiciously, this grant request has been modified to cover an entirely different expense but for the same amount of money. This is shady at best and illegal and unconstitutional at worst.

Three members of this Board have already said they'll vote against this revised proposal. I was startled to read this morning that Supervisor Ron Roberts said he was still deciding. Still deciding what? Still deciding whether to dole out this taxpayer money when there are questions about its constitutionality? Still deciding whether to give more money to this group when County Counsel is still trying to determine whether past money to the organization must be returned? Still deciding whether your constituents want their tax dollars spent on this group?

There's no decision here, Mr. Roberts. The people of your district would vote NO on this.

Why did you vote for the original grant to begin with? Because you didn't read it? Because you didn't really look into what this grant was about? Because you always, automatically, rubber stamp the other Supervisors' grants?

You can't continue to do business this way as the County of San Diego. You should have transparency, independent judgment, and a meaningful dialog about how our tax dollars are spent. You have turned the Neighborhood Reinvestment Grants into political slush funds – more than \$100 million in taxpayer money over the 10 years that you have blindly approved for each other to further your own political purposes. It is a breach of trust with the people of San Diego. It's no wonder that our citizens are losing faith in their government and political leaders.

A number of the organizations that are funded through this program are worthy organizations and deserve our support. However, the taxpayers deserve a process that gives them a voice in discretionary spending and doesn't allow elected officials to play politics with our tax money for their own gain.

I urge you to reject this grant.