

Opinion: More senior legal shenanigans in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

It has been recently confirmed from informed sources that a new attorney has been hired by senior legal. Her first day on the job was May 1. On May 25, this newly hired attorney was informed that her job was being eliminated in El Dorado County's new proposed budget for 2017-18.

The new attorney's prior position was in a law firm, a position that she quit in order to take this job with senior legal, which has a staff of one full-time attorney (this new hire), a part-time attorney, a paralegal and a secretary.



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In a phone call with the CAO, this columnist asked the question whether he knew or not that as of May 1, just four weeks before the release of the budget, did he know that the entire senior legal program was going to be terminated as has been proposed in the new budget. His answer was no. The upshot of this new El Dorado County budget for the fiscal year from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, means that even this new senior legal attorney who quit her job from a Sacramento law firm to take this job will be fired. According to the proposed budget, she will get a pink slip no later than Aug. 4.

Interesting fact No. 2: on May 5, District 1 Supervisor John

Hidahl put out a press release and notice written by the new county public information officer, Carla Hass, telling the world that Hidahl would be having an El Dorado Hills Community Council Meeting on May 8 at 7pm to "offer a great opportunity for residents to learn about what's happening in the community. The featured speaker is Raelene Nunn, the District 1 commissioner on Aging... The county provides several important services to our seniors, including legal assistance and more."

To refresh your memory, just 23 days later, the budget would be published showing no more legal assistance to seniors.

The salary and benefits paid to Hass (about \$150,000/year would pay 60 percent of the EDC budget for senior legal). I am sure this same PIO will spin the termination of senior legal services as a benefit for county residents, like EDC will reduce probate costs for seniors now that conmen can more easily prey on what money they have left to live on.

More troubling is the fact that informed sources knew of this decision on or about May 20, meaning this decision may have been made by the county administration or the strong possibility thereof well prior to May 1, the date EDC hired this new senior legal attorney, as budgets are several months in the making. New hires beware, the decision of your hiring in the future may be made after the decision to fire you, of course unless you have a high-ranking friend in county government. It's also appears obvious that high ranking county officials knew of this decision for some time.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.