

NEWS RELEASE

County of Santa Clara
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COUNTY SUPERVISOR GEORGE SHIRAKAWA GUILTY OF MISUSING PUBLIC MONEY AND CAMPAIGN FUNDS

The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office today charged County Supervisor George Shirakawa Jr. with five felonies: four counts of perjury and one count of misappropriation of public funds, as well as seven misdemeanors for failing to file accurate campaign reports. The 51-year-old, who has served as president of the Board of Supervisors, engaged in a persistent pattern of misusing public money and campaign funds for prohibited expenses including parties, golf outings and gambling.

Shirakawa has agreed to plead guilty to all counts and hand in his resignation from the Board of Supervisors to the County Clerk today.

He will be arraigned before the Hon. Philip Pennypacker on March 18, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in Department 23. Assistant District Attorney Karyn Sinunu-Towery will ask the court for substantial jail time.

"The public makes political contributions, votes and pays taxes with expectations that their elected officials will work diligently to make this county a better place to live," District Attorney Jeff Rosen said. "By abusing his power and misappropriating public money that had been entrusted to him, Mr. Shirakawa violated both the law and the faith of the residents of Santa Clara County."

The investigation of the county official was launched late last year, after a Metro newspaper article detailed that the supervisor had neglected to file a series of campaign disclosure forms.

The four-month investigation by the District Attorney's Office and the Fair Political Practices Commission showed that Shirakawa's financial abuse was obscured by filing false campaign statements, or filing none at all, abetted by infrequent and cursory county oversight.

The supervisor has also agreed to sign a stipulation admitting to ten counts of violating the Political Reform Act, by making expenditures of campaign funds for personal use, in violation of Government Code Section 89512. He has agreed to a penalty of \$5,000 per count, for a total penalty of \$50,000.

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