



December 12, 2024

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Patrick Fitzgerald
Chief Counsel, Assembly Ethics Committee
1020 N Street, Room 351
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Speaker pro Tem, California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, California 95814

Erin Peth
Chief Counsel, Senate Ethics Committee
1020 N Street, Room 554
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: Complaint of Violation of Standards of Conduct by a Member of the Legislature
Accused of Bribery by the U.S. Department of Justice**

Dear Speaker Rivas and pro Tem McGuire:

I am writing to request an immediate investigation into alleged violations of standards of conduct by a Member of the Legislature, including, but not limited to, violations of Government Code §§ 8920 and 8921 (Code of Legislative Ethics), as well as potential violations of Government Code §§ 1090, 87100, and 87103.

On December 5, 2024, Baldwin Park City Attorney, Robert Manuel Nacionales Tafoya, pled guilty to federal bribery and tax evasion charges.¹ A written plea agreement was filed with the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Within the agreement, the U.S. Department of Justice describes in detail a “Bribery Scheme Involving Person 20” beginning on page 15.

“Person 20” is described as an unindicted co-conspirator who received \$30,000 in illegal cash payments to his or her campaign for state elected office, and was subsequently successful in being elected to the Legislature. “Person 20” is also accused of soliciting a bribe payment in the amount of \$200,000 to secure a marijuana dispensary permit from the City of Baldwin Park.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/former-commerce-city-manager-and-former-baldwin-park-city-attorney-bribery-guilty>

Although the plea agreement does not specifically name the individual legislator, there is sufficient information contained within the record to warrant an immediate investigation by the Assembly and Senate Ethics Committees to identify the person described in the plea agreement, and to consider any and all appropriate disciplinary action.

The Public Trust placed in every elected Member of the California Legislature must not only be protected against clear criminal violations, but must also be safeguarded against any appearance of impropriety.

If you have any questions, please contact my Chief of Staff Shawn Lewis at (916) 319-2063 or Shawn.Lewis@asm.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Essayli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bill Essayli
Assemblyman, District 63