

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: July 17, 2009

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE RECUSES SELF FROM RACIAL PROFILING CASE AGAINST SHERIFF JOE ARPAIO

(Phoenix, AZ) Federal District Court Judge Mary Murguia has recused herself from a racial profiling lawsuit filed against Sheriff Joseph Arpaio. The recusal came about after the attorney for the Sheriff and his officers filed a motion in February asking the judge to reassign the case. The court case alleges racial profiling by the Sheriff and his deputies during Arpaio's crime suppression sweeps.

The Sheriff's Office asked the judge to recuse herself when they became aware that the judge's identical twin sister was the president of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). The organization has published numerous articles attacking Arpaio's immigration enforcement and the Sheriff personally. Among other epithets authored by La Raza, the organization referred to "Arpaio and his thugs", and called the Sheriff "a relentlessly self-promoting caricature of a sheriff" and "unrepentant, arrogant and monumentally disingenuous."

One other La Raza article directly accused Arpaio and his deputies of widely engaging in racial profiling against Latinos – the very allegation at issue in the lawsuit that had been pending before Judge Murguia. On Monday, July 13, Sheriff's attorneys subpoenaed documents and records from Janet Murguia and the national organization based in Washington D.C. The case will now be randomly reassigned by the Clerk of the District Court.

"I think the judge reached the right result in this case", said Arpaio. "I never thought the judge had any racial or cultural bias at all. I think that the statements and articles authored by her twin sister showed Janet Murguia's personal hatred and animosity toward me and my deputies. The judge demonstrated wisdom and common sense in reaching this decision. It is far better to let this case go forward with not even a remote appearance of impropriety that could affect the public's perception of fairness."

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