

John Moorlach, a candidate for a vacant seat on the OC Board of Supervisors, provided the following statement to Voice of OC on March 1, 2021 when asked for comment on the major spending against him by the union that represents county sheriff's deputies:

"This long tale all starts with SB 400 (1999).

While serving as County Treasurer-Tax Collector and on the OCERS Board, I never would have thought that the five Republican Supervisors at the time would have voted for '3 percent at 50' pension enhancement for deputy sheriffs, retroactive to the date of hire. This was a 50 percent increase in retirement benefits that were never funded for over the careers of the impacted personnel. It was a massive transfer of wealth that created immediate unfunded liabilities.

But, they did. It was a supplemental agenda item and they fought over who would make the motion.

It started my concerns about pension plans in California. Crusade might be a better word.

My fears have come to fruition and the pension crowd out has had a major impact on cities and counties around the state. The cities of Vallejo, Stockton and San Bernardino have been Chapter 9 events.

It has always been a math problem for me.

In 2004, when the Board, on a 3-2 vote, approved a pension upgrade for the nonsafety personnel, it was the motivation for me to run for Supervisor.

Norberto can pull out the clips as he did some excellent actuarial investigating at the time. He was still at the Register and he and Tony Saavedra discovered the truth about the real costs.

AOCDS ran a Republican against me in 2006, Stanton City Councilman David Shawver. He's endorsed me in this race, by the way.

AOCDS spent a lot of money in IEs for him and against me in that race.

They spent money in opposition IEs in my 2015 race for Senate, too.

Their consultant, Peter Mitchell, just has it out for me.

Maybe it's because he gets the customary cut from all of the funds spent.

AOCDS even spent money on IEs against me in my Senate reelection effort in November.

After being elected to Supervisor, I convinced the Board to sue AOCDS over the retroactivity of the benefit because it created an immediate debt. The state constitution does not allow for the creation of a debt unless it receives a two-thirds voter approval.

The Superior Court Judge called it a lease and not a mortgage.

The Appellate Court called it an estimate and not a debt.

The State Supreme Court refused to hear this massively important case and apply its scholarship to the matter, thus exempting pension enhancements from the definition of debt.

For a very long time I have taken the policy of not accepting contributions from the public employee unions that I would have to bargain with. It would be a conflict of interest, as I have to represent the taxpayers.

Last year, one group reviewed the contribution reports of the 120 legislators and found that I was the only one that did not take a contribution from a police officer association or similar union.

I always had an open door policy with Tom Dominguez. We always conducted ourselves in a very professional manner. And, I maintained a healthy relationship with Tom after I left the Board, sharing a number of flights with him either going to or from Sacramento.

I hope to maintain a professional relationship with AOCDS should I be elected.

My focus has not been on my political career, it has been on representing the taxpayers. Public safety unions can be very antagonistic when you are not in their pocket. The stories of Jim Righimer and Steve Mensinger come to mind.

Running for public office is not black and white as one would wish it to be. But, if I have to endure the IEs, then so be it.

The voters need to decide if they want a Supervisor that stands in their corner or in the corner of the public unions.

The city of Costa Mesa has dropped to 34th place out of 34 cities since it became a union town. It was in 18th place in 2010.

California has become dominated by public employee unions. We can never expect reforms in Sacramento because any Democrat that steps out of line will be replaced. Just ask Senator Steve Glazer what it's like to address areas that need reform. He didn't even get his Party's endorsement at the fall 2019 convention in Long Beach.

We were fortunate to get PEPRA in 2012 with Gov. Brown. At least it included a provision prohibiting the granting of retroactive benefits. But, Gov. Brown couldn't come close to getting everything he wanted.

So the voters have a clear choice of which way Orange County should go. With someone who will be fair to employees when it fits within the budget with me. Or with someone who will give them anything they want, regardless of the budget implications.

All I can say is that when I served on the Board, Orange County ranked 46th out of 58 counties in 2010. It's now in 24th place. I would say that my policies served the taxpayers well. I would hate to see it slip away."