

Yuba County Weed Wars: DA Asked to Investigate Alleged Felony Voter Intimidation, Accused Blames Supporter

A Yuba County Supervisor is accused of voter intimidation for threatening to identify recall signers as "criminal marijuana supporters."

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In a humorous turn of events for the [Recall](#) efforts against Andrew Rudolph Vasquez Jr., Yuba County Supervisor, District 1, a group has requested an investigation into Vasquez for possible felony voter intimidation only to learn that the accused is blaming his supporter for the intimidating message.

Vasquez is accused of mailing a letter to each of his constituents in District 1 claiming that they "will be targeted as criminal marijuana supporters," if they sign a petition for his recall.

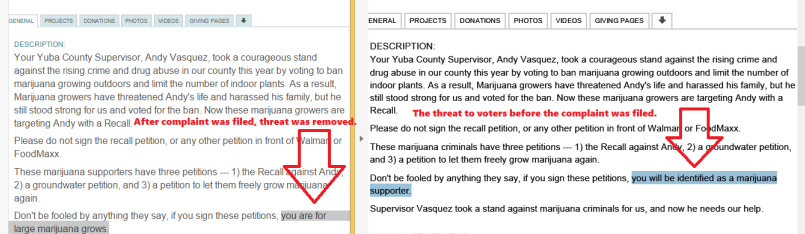
According to the request sent to the Yuba County DA, Vasquez allegedly violated [California Elections Code 18540](#), which forbids any person to "make use of or

threaten to make use of any force, violence, or tactic of coercion or intimidation, to induce or compel any other person to vote or refrain from voting." Such a violation is a felony punishable by imprisonment of 16 months or two or three years.

Additionally, the group says that Vasquez's threat to use signatures to target voters as "marijuana criminals" shows criminal intent to break California Elections Code 18650, which forbids the use of signatures on a petition for any purpose other than qualifying for the ballot and is a misdemeanor.



Accused of intimidating voters



A screenshot of the Andrew Vasquez recall fund-raising page both after, and before the complaint for voter intimidation was filed.

The screenshot shows two versions of a recall page. The left version has red arrows pointing to the text: "After complaint was filed, threat was removed" and "you will be identified as a marijuana supporter". The right version has red arrows pointing to the text: "The threat to voters before the complaint was filed." and "you will be identified as a marijuana supporter".

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In response to a question about the origin of the letter by KCRA's Claire Doan, Vasquez claims the content of the letter is not his responsibility and that his supporter, Gary Simpson, wrote the letter. "He is entitled to his opinions," said Vasquez. "Whatever he says in it, that's his statement."

(<http://www.kcra.com/news/Recall-supporters-claim-supervisor-mailer-intimidates-voters/34966954>)

It is unclear, however, whether Simpson would face any investigations or criminal liability for the threats as the letter was paid for and mailed to the voters of District 1 by Vasquez's own PAC.

"I can see why he is so quick to blame someone else for that letter, knowing the possible consequences," said Deborah Tharp, consultant for the Yuba Patients Coalition, who supported the recall efforts.

The recall has since failed to qualify. According to the letter from Yuba Patients Coalition attorney Charnel James, the failure to qualify is largely due to Vasquez's intimidation of his own voters.

"As a fellow officer of the court, I hope that you will take these allegations with the grave seriousness that I feel are warranted. It is apparent that between the mailing to all his district members, and the posts on his Facebook pages, that he fully intended to intimidate people away from signing a recall petition against him, or to register to vote, with a knowledge and intent to do so. These actions could and did affect the outcome of a possible election. Because the elements of the crime have been met in this instance, Mr. Vasquez should be held to answer for these charges."

Vasquez also posted the letter on an internet fund-raising page which has since been altered and apparently received very little in donations.

In response to the request for investigation Patrick McGrath, Yuba County DA, reported to the Appeal Democrat that it was "unlikely he will be able to review them in detail before later this month" as he would be "out of the office next week."

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