

First California Bank of LA Agrees to Multimillion Dollar Settlement for CPM Client U.S. Senator Feinstein & Other CA Federal & State Lawmakers

07.16.2014

First California Bank of Los Angeles has agreed to a multimillion dollar settlement for U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and other California federal and state lawmakers, as well as some non-profits. The bank was alleged to have aided the former campaign treasurer – Kinde Durkee – with stealing thousands of dollars from campaign accounts.

Feinstein first filed suit in Los Angeles state court in September 2011, and later the campaign committees for U.S. Reps. Loretta Sanchez, Linda Sanchez and Susan Davis and state Sen. Lou Correa filed separate suits alleging Durkee had stolen thousands of dollars from their campaigns with the help of First California. Durkee was sentenced to eight years in prison for the theft. In April, 2013, the U.S. Department of Justice agreed to grant the Feinstein campaign's request for federal prosecutors to turn over computer evidence of Durkee.

The Feinstein campaign alleged that First California ignored warning signs that Durkee was taking money. Feinstein's lawyers used this to show that Durkee moved money from Committee accounts into a First California account to pay her mortgage and credit card bills. First California previously interpled \$2.5 million that was frozen in the accounts. The case was set for trial August 13, 2014. Justin Berger said "this was a case that took a lot of digging through E-mails, then the story came out." Joe Cotchett said "once we got the hard drive, the scheme was clear."

Feinstein's committee is represented by **Joseph W. Cotchett** and **Justin T. Berger**. The other legislators are represented by Wylie A. Aitken and Atticus N. Wegman of the Aitken Aitken Cohn Law Firm in Orange County.

Attorneys

Joseph W. Cotchett

Justin T. Berger

Practice Areas

Commercial Litigation

Securities / Financial Fraud

FIRST CALIFORNIA BANK OF LA AGREES TO MULTIMILLION DOLLAR SETTLEMENT FOR CPM CLIENT U.S. SENATOR FEINSTEIN & OTHER CA FEDERAL & STATE LAWMAKERS

The Settlement includes for Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy clients:

Senator Dianne Feinstein - \$2 million

L.A. Democratic Committee - \$100,000

National Popular Vote - \$600,000

Senator Jose Solorio - \$330,000

Chris Holden Committee - \$40,000

Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster - \$56,000

Dennis Zine - \$25,000

Latino Diabetes Association - \$20,000

Roughly \$800,000 went to other committees of Sanchez, Davis and Correa represented by the Aitken law firm. The cases are: *William Wardlaw v. First California Bank, et al.*, SC114232; *Lou Correa for State Senate 2010 v. First California Bank, et al.*, BC479872; *Committee to Re-Elect Loretta Sanchez v. First California Bank, et al.*, BC479873, in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles.