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Federalist Society and ATRA Host Discussion at Cal Western

Panel Discusses Ethics and Transparency in California's Courts

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – A panel of attorneys, advocates and opinion leaders came together today to discuss ethics and transparency in California's courts.

The audience, made up primarily of attorneys and Cal Western law students, heard arguments in favor of adopting codes of conduct for attorneys general, and embracing greater transparency of the relationships between elected officials, outside counsel, and judges. Panelists also discussed the Associated Press's investigation into the mislabeling of contracts between former Attorney General Bill Lockyer and a number of legal and lobbying firms, including campaign contributors.

“When it comes to our legal system, the more the public knows about what is really going on, the more we can hold our elected officials accountable,” said Bob Gaglione, attorney and former host of the Independent Counsel radio program.

The panel discussion, which was moderated by Judge Jan Goldsmith, included thoughts from Gaglione; Peter Scheer, executive director of the California First Amendment Coalition; Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association; and Lorie Zapf, president of San Diego Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse.

“I think we can all agree that transparency in our legal system is rarely, if ever, a bad thing,” said Zapf. “By continuing to push Attorney General Jerry Brown to adopt proposed reforms set forth to improve transparency and accountability, we can help maintain the legitimacy of our elected officers and our courts.”

The panel was hosted by the Federalist Society and the American Tort Reform Association.

The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies is a group of conservatives and libertarians interested in the current state of the legal order. It is founded on the principles that the state exists to preserve freedom, that the separation of governmental powers is central to our Constitution, and that it is emphatically the province and duty of the judiciary to say what the law is, not what it should be. The Society seeks both to promote an awareness of these principles and to further their application through its activities. Adam Van Susteren serves as the San Diego Chapter President.

The American Tort Reform Association, based in Washington, D.C., is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to tort and liability reform through public education and the enactment of legislation. Its members include nonprofit organizations and small and large companies, as well as trade, business and professional associations from the state and national level.

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