

# The Mercury News

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## Opinion: San Jose POA is transparently taking action

Police union moved swiftly to fully cooperate with U.S. Attorney's office and launch its own investigation



The federal investigation has found no wrongdoing by anyone in the San Jose Police Department. (Bay Area News Group File Photo)

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The drug smuggling charges against our former civilian office manager has created legitimate concerns that are being swiftly addressed by our union in a transparent and thorough manner. What's unfortunate, yet predictable, is that some individuals and organizations are conniving ways to exploit this one individual's allegedly abhorrent criminal behavior to try to weaken our union for their political gain.

Some have abandoned reason, recklessly speculated and knowingly disregarded the facts surrounding this case in their quest to besmirch the reputation of our union and our rank-and-file police officers.

It's time to set the record straight.

The U.S. Attorney filed a criminal complaint against Joanne Segovia for allegedly importing and distributing fentanyl. Throughout the complaint and all accompanying information released by the U.S. Attorney, Segovia is the only individual associated with these alleged crimes.

The complaint is very clear that, beyond Segovia, no individual associated with the San Jose Police Officers' Association, the San Jose Police Department or the City of San Jose has any involvement. It's curious how this fact escapes those attacking our union.

Calls for an outside investigation shouted at press conferences or appearing in editorials ignore the reality that the U.S. Attorney and the Department of Homeland Security are conducting an ongoing federal investigation. If those entities need assistance from our local District Attorney or from the SJPD, both DA Jeff Rosen and Chief Anthony Mata have rightfully pledged their full cooperation.

Yet, questions remain.

Such as: "How did the SJPOA not know that its "executive director," the head of its union, was involved with this illegal activity?" The answer starts by understanding what Segovia's actual job entailed at the SJPOA.

Segovia was named executive director of our union several years ago. It was a title bump. However, her actual duties were akin to an office manager who oversaw a staff of three civilian employees and ensured the smooth administration of the union.

Segovia did not participate in or provide input on labor negotiations. She did not represent officers in legal or discipline matters, attend meetings with city officials or councilmembers, or advise on political endorsements. She did not make financial decisions or have check-writing authority or authorize any political action committee endorsements or expenditures. She was not, and never was, the "head of the union."

These are important distinctions because there's been so much misinformed speculation and purposeful innuendo as to how the "head of the union" could have gotten away with what is alleged. Segovia flew under the radar precisely because she was not the head of our union and allegedly orchestrated a yearslong deception that, according to newspaper reports, duped not only those who worked closely with her but even her family members.

Upon learning of the investigation, our union moved swiftly to fully cooperate with the U.S. Attorney's office and placed Segovia on leave. We subsequently launched phase one of our internal investigation, culminating in the termination of Segovia. Phase two will be conducted by an unimpeachable, experienced investigator who will determine if there was any policy, procedure, protocol or mechanism that could have been in place that would have identified the alleged deceitful criminal conduct sooner.

Union decisions are made by our president, the executive board, and ultimately authorized by our entire board of directors on behalf of the men and women who are members of our union. All of us are sworn members of the SJP, and we are all disgusted and deeply saddened by these allegations as they fly in the face of our collective efforts to take fentanyl and those who push it off our streets. We will continue to act transparently based upon facts and not speculation. We urge others to do the same.

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