



LAWYERS CLUB
of San Diego

NEWS RELEASE

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Lawyers Club of San Diego and Community Leaders Call for Employers to Join Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative

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SAN DIEGO – Lawyers Club of San Diego, in collaboration with San Diego City Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry and the National Conflict Resolution Center, is pleased to announce the launch of the Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative.

Lawyers Club and its partners will formally launch the Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative at a press conference Tuesday, Oct. 15, at 9:30 a.m. at Civic Center Plaza, 1200 3rd Ave., San Diego. Speakers will include Barbara Bry, San Diego City Council President Pro Tem; Steven P. Dinkin, President of the National Conflict Resolution Center; San Diego Union-Tribune Editor in Chief Jeff Light; and Lawyers Club of San Diego President Elvira Cortez.

The Initiative began as a response to the #MeToo movement and brought together community leaders in a collaborative effort to address in a positive and productive way the means to stamp out workplace harassment while at the same time promoting equal pay in the workplace.

Through the Initiative, Lawyers Club and its partners seek to inspire and empower companies to create workplace cultures that make San Diego America's finest place to work.

“Without pay equity, diversity and civility in the workplace we cannot advance women in the workplace,” Lawyers Club president Elvira Cortez said. “We hope this Initiative – which already has brought together important community leaders, businesses, and government agencies – will increase opportunities and create better workplaces for everyone in San Diego.”

Lawyers Club invites all regional employers to adopt the Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative Commitment, a statement that the employer commits to strive for work environments free of sexual harassment and gender discrimination by adopting and enforcing policies that promote pay equity; respectful workplace speech, language and conduct; environments where employees feel safe to speak and report concerns; education for all employees and measurable strategies to

evaluate the education's effectiveness; and positive engagement from employees regarding these issues.

Twenty local employers already have signed on to the Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative Commitment, including the San Diego City Attorney's Office, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, Athena San Diego, San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, and a number of law firms and nonprofit organizations. The San Diego Union-Tribune, one of the first to sign, has agreed to publish full-page ads listing all local companies that have signed the pledge periodically throughout the year to create public acknowledgement and accountability.

"The employers who have already signed on to the Commitment understand that accountability and education will lead to changes in the workplace that are difficult to address through legislation," Bry said. "We already have laws on the books addressing these issues, but we still experience the same problems in the workplace. Through this initiative, we can work together to make San Diego more equitable for all of our region's workforce."

The Initiative provides resources for employers, including tool kits developed by Lawyers Club to provide information about workplace harassment laws, as well as workshops facilitated by the National Conflict Resolution Center. The workshops include: "The ART of Inclusive Communication," which addresses how to cultivate inclusive communication in a diverse workforce; "The Exchange," which provides tools for managers and supervisors to facilitate conversations between employees in conflict situations; and "The Bystander Challenge," which covers how to empower bystanders to speak up when they see inappropriate conduct in the workplace. "The Bystander Challenge" workshop is compliant with the new California state-mandated anti-harassment training.

"We believe that most workplace conflict occurs when communication breaks down," said Steven Dinkin, president of the National Conflict Resolution Center. "There is a huge cost to employees and the company when this occurs, and usually it's because individuals have not been equipped with the tools needed to handle complex or challenging situations. Companies need to be doing more than simply meeting minimum training requirements. They need to offer workshops that show a commitment to preventing conflict, discrimination and harassment."

For more information about the Workplace Equity & Civility Initiative, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/weci/about-weci>.

About Lawyers Club of San Diego

Lawyers Club of San Diego is a specialty bar association whose mission is to advance the status of women in the law and society. Members are attorneys, judges, law students and others in the San Diego community, of all genders, who share Lawyers Club's interests and goals. The objectives and purposes of Lawyers Club are to consider and address, by all lawful means, common problems of women in the community with the overall objective of eliminating discrimination based on sex. Founded in 1972, Lawyers Club of San Diego is the largest specialty bar association in San Diego, with more than 1,200 members, and more than 25 committees focusing on diverse areas, including cultivating leadership, addressing the concerns

of diverse female attorneys, and ending human trafficking. For more information about Lawyers Club, visit www.lawyersclubsandiego.com.

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