



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2010

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In Case You Missed It

Secretary Of State Turmoil Started Early

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Herrera's Staff Turmoil Started Early

By Steve Terrell

Santa Fe New Mexican

September 9, 2010

<http://www.santafenewmexican.com/Local%20News/Herrera-s-staff-turmoil-started-early->

Secretary of State Mary Herrera's problems with her staff in the last few months have been well documented. But these problems didn't happen all at once.

In fact, some say her staff problems have been brewing from the beginning of her term. That view is bolstered by a letter of resignation from Herrera's first Elections Bureau director in January 2008 — just a little over a year after she took office.

In case you've missed the most recent development, Herrera late last week fired two administrators who had talked with the FBI about possible wrongdoing in the office. A few months ago, Herrera's election director left, firing off a blistering letter accusing her of breaking laws and policies.

For her part, Herrera in recent weeks asked state police to conduct a sweep for electronic bugs — apparently no such listening devices were found — and filed public-information requests for e-mails of past and present staff members and certain political enemies.

One of those former staffers was Albuquerque lawyer Daniel Ivey-Soto, who resigned in early 2008 as Herrera's Elections Bureau chief.

He said at the time he was quitting to pursue an appointment to a vacant judgeship. It's long been whispered that there was more to that story, and the letter shows that's true.

Ivey-Soto began his "Dear Mary" letter saying he was sending his resignation by e-mail because "communication between us has been strained as of late."

"It is important in any agency to have a sense of teamwork," he wrote. "This is especially true when there is a small team. It has been apparent to me for some time that I am not integrated into the team here at the Secretary of State's Office. This saddens me greatly, because I really do have tremendous respect for you and I believe that you are capable of showing great wisdom when you rely on your own instincts."

But Ivey-Soto apparently believed Herrera wasn't relying on her own instincts.

"This is your team, and Don Francisco is your coach," he said, referring to Francisco Trujillo, Herrera's top deputy, who prefers to use the Spanish honorific before his name. "I know Don Francisco has asked you repeatedly to fire me, and I appreciate the loyalty you have shown. My staying, however, is only worthwhile if we can work together as a team. Don Francisco's behavior recently confirms for me that this is not possible. Because he is the coach, the honorable thing for me to do is to finish my task, and depart gracefully."

Read the full story at: <http://www.santafenewmexican.com/Local%20News/Herrera-s-staff-turmoil-started-early->

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