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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**El Paso County Attorney Settles “Operation Linebacker” Lawsuit
*Agreement Avoids Lengthy and Costly Litigation Process***

El Paso County Attorney José Rodríguez announces that Commissioner’s Court has approved an out of court settlement with local activist Carl Starr, to dismiss a civil lawsuit filed in federal court against the El Paso County.

The lawsuit filed on May 26 and amended on June 15 2006, alleged a violation of Starr’s Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution arising from a traffic stop on a bus that was traveling on I-10 near Fabens and involving sheriff deputies.

The agreement in no way should be considered an admission of liability from either party and its only purpose is to avoid a costly litigation process.

The settlement on this case states that, in exchange for the release of all liability by the County, the El Paso Sheriff Office agrees to memorialize in writing its policy that prohibits Sheriff’s Department Deputies from enforcing civil immigration law.

As part of the settlement, the El Paso County Sheriff’s Department agrees to provide its peace officers with training to help them understand the limits of their authority with regard to enforcement of civil immigration law.

County Attorney José Rodríguez says the settlement is important because it would help to dissipate the concerns expressed by immigrant groups regarding activities conducted by sheriff officers as part of “Operation Linebacker”.

“We want to ensure the community that Sheriff’s deputies will not be enforcing civil immigration law; that is the duty of the federal government. The Sheriff’s Department will continue to focus its efforts on crime prevention. All citizens should feel confident in reporting crime without regard to their immigration status,” said Rodríguez.

- 30 -

For those interested members of the media, First Assistant County Attorney Joanne Bernal will be available for interviews Tuesday morning between 10 and 11 at her office downtown. Please confirm if you are interested in talking to her or call to make further arrangements.