

# **EXHIBIT 23**

January 24, 2024

Honorable Judge Walter:

Let me begin by stating that I apologize to my family, my constituents, and to the City of Los Angeles. My actions are not acceptable, and I will accept the consequences for my actions.

I never imagined being in the situation I am in. If I had a clearer mind at the time of my actions, if I had stuck to the values that I was raised with, and which I held to high esteem during much of my time in public office, I would not be here today writing this letter to you. Nor would those close to me be suffering as much as they are because of my actions.

I was raised by hard working parents that taught me right from wrong. My whole life was dedicated to do the right thing and to help those in need. I took these values to my public service career as a Board Member at the Los Angeles Unified School District, and as a Councilmember for the City of Los Angeles. But something changed in the latter part of my public service career. I steered and flew too close to the sun because of temptation and selfishness.

When the raids at my home first occurred in November of 2018, and as the process of this investigation went on, I initially blamed others. I blamed a former staff member for their criminal activity that I was not involved in, yet they drug me in to it. I blamed the over-zealous FBI agents and prosecutors for wanting to make a name for themselves. My blame towards them was compounded when they went on to paint a very drastic picture of who I am, and I would tell myself, "How dare they, that's not who I am." I was in denial.

I was in denial because I did not want to be on the side of history that the prosecution was painting me to be. After all, I rationalized, I have created policies and championed transparency and good government. I created the LAUSD's first ethics office and a lobbyist registration system for transparency, and I brought together good government organizations to successfully reform ethics rules at the City. That's the pack I ran with, I told myself. And in those solemn times when I took a vote on a controversial issue and only my own mind knows why I voted the way I did, I felt self-pride knowing that I voted in the best interest of the public.

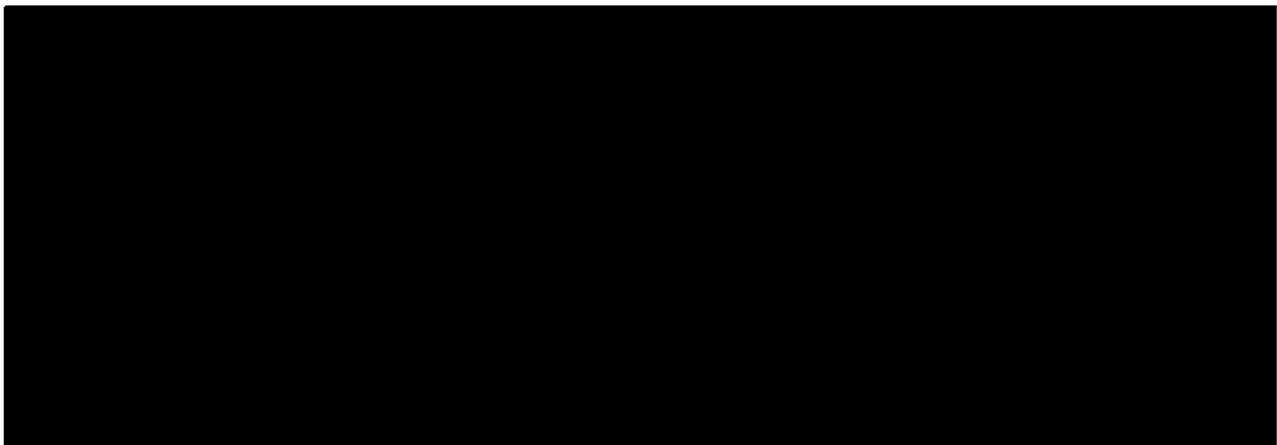
But as the investigation went on, I realized that there was no one to blame but myself for the predicament that I found myself in. It was a process for me to accept responsibility. When I was involved in the actions concerning this case, I did not fully realize what I was doing. I got lost in it. Shiny things were dangled in front of me and I could not resist temptation. The money, the fancy dinners, luxury flights. It was there for the taking and I was not strong enough to say no. I rationalized that I was working long hours, that I had made a lot of personal sacrifices, and that I too deserve something. I wanted to reward myself for the sacrifices I had made. But at the end, my weakness got me nothing, and it has forever changed my life.

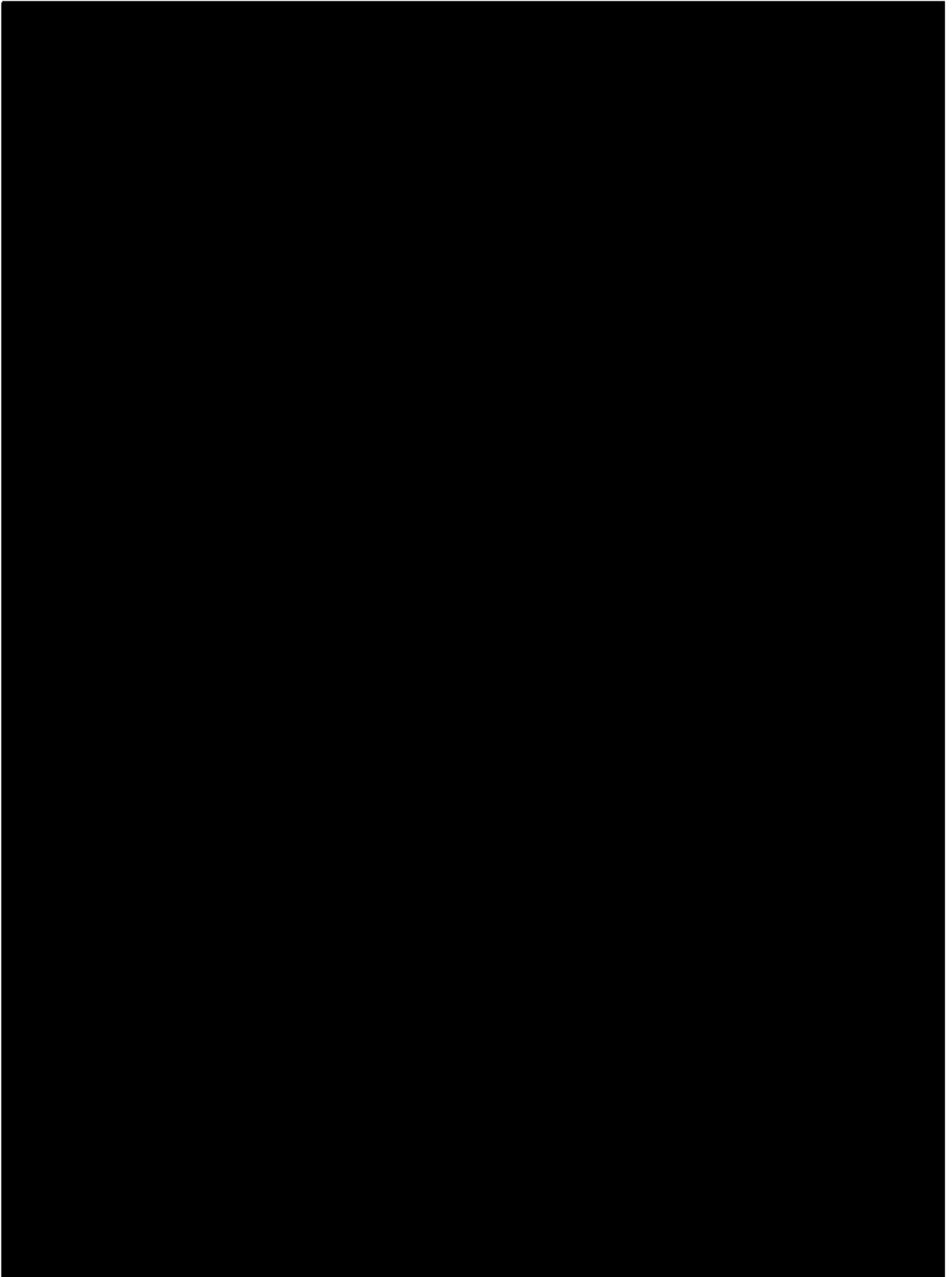
My mistakes harmed those that are dearest to me and those that believed in me. I was blessed with a beautiful family, a great career, and wonderful friends. Coming from nothing I worked hard to make a good life for myself and my family. I was doing good deeds in the community and I was providing for and planning for the future of my family within the realm of hard work and my salary. I did not have to, or need to, accept money or gifts. I lost everything because I was blinded by the glitz of easy money. I hope my predicament sends a message to others in public office. It is not worth it. Do it the right way within the rules, and everything will be alright; and, for those that got involved in public service for the right reason, remind yourself why you got into it in the first place.

Upon reflection, I know that I am not the politician that has been portrayed of me through this process. Money has never driven me. Quite the opposite. Early in my political career I left my job at a prestigious law firm to make \$24,000 a year at the LAUSD School Board because of my commitment to helping others and my calling to public service. All I wanted was to make a good life for my family and provide for them to do well, with the same good values that I grew up with, even under modest means. But now, all I feel is shame and embarrassment.

I also have a sense of failure. I have failed very few times in anything I set myself out to do in life. But now I find that I have failed at life itself. I have failed at life because I cannot provide for my kids and I am leaving them with the mental trauma that I have brought to them because of my actions. I am tormented and feel helpless knowing that I will not be able to be there for my kids in the next formative years of their life. A time in their life when they need their father. I want desperately to do something to make sure my kids will be ok, but I have nothing to offer. I have been financially ruined and I certainly cannot provide them my most valuable commodity since I will be incarcerated: my time. My kids have a fragile future, and it is my fault.

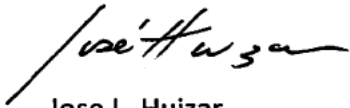
Frankly, our family's world has been utterly destroyed. It has been five years of mental anguish, suffering, and humiliation. My kids used to be happy go lucky youngsters that approached life with zeal and amazement. They enjoyed life and enjoyed being part of their father's public service commitment of helping the community. They participated in the numerous community events my office organized and they were part of numerous community meetings where we discussed improvements for the community. They took pride in our work and identity.







My whole life has been turned upside down and I regret ever having departed from the values that brought me to public service in the first place. I have caused unanticipated collateral damage to people and institutions that I care deeply about. I ask for forgiveness. I have already paid a huge price for the consequences of my actions these past five years. I have lost my reputation, ability to make a living so that I can provide for my kids, and I have hampered my kids' future and their mental health. I lost everything. Your Honor, I ask that you find it in your heart to limit my time of incarceration. Time lost and damage caused cannot be recouped, but I have lots of healing to do.



Jose L. Huizar