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JUAN GUERRA CONTINUES ONE-MAN CIRCUS

HAVING BEEN VOTED OUT OF OFFICE, WILLACY COUNTY D.A. COMMITS ONE LAST ACT OF POLITICAL REVENGE

In the March 2008 Democratic Primary, 70% of the Willacy County voters elected to remove Juan Guerra as Willacy County District Attorney. Now, with only a few weeks left in his term, Mr. Guerra has again chosen to misuse his position in an attempt to seek revenge on those who he sees as political enemies. This time, he has filed a baseless indictment against a host of public officials, including Vice President Richard Cheney, former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., Judge Migdalia Lopez, Judge Janet Leal, former United States Attorney Mervyn Mosbacher, Willacy County District Clerk Gilbert Lozano, and others including former special prosecutor Gustavo Garza.

It is a shame that Guerra has chosen to dedicate his energy to fighting with his fellow public servants, rather than actually prosecuting criminals. Mr. Guerra's conviction rate was so low, and his dismissal rate so high, that he became known as the "Great Emancipator."¹ Instead of focusing on the murderers, rapists, and drunk drivers he was elected to prosecute, Guerra filed at least 43 proceedings against other elected officials that he considered to be his political enemies.² According to a February 27, 2008 article in the Raymondville Chronicle/Willacy County News, Guerra's political vendettas have cost the taxpayers of Willacy County at least \$876,000 in legal fees.³

In a recent court proceeding, Presiding District Judge J. Manuel Banales stated, "These kind of cases have made Willacy County the laughing stock of the state and the nation."⁴

This is not the first time that Guerra has attempted to turn the justice system into a circus. Last year, after his office was searched as part of a criminal investigation, Guerra refused to appear in court to prosecute criminals. Instead, he camped out in front of the courthouse in a trailer with three goats, a chicken, and a horse to create "a circus."⁵

Guerra has repeatedly claimed that Sen. Lucio, along with District Judge Midgaglia Lopez, District Clerk Gilbert Lozano, Sheriff Larry Spence, and other well-respected elected officials, are part of some conspiracy against him. In reality, the alleged conspiracy exists only in Guerra's mind, but that reality has not prevented him from continuing to misuse the criminal justice system in an attempt to extract revenge for imagined slights.

"Senator Lucio is completely innocent and has done nothing wrong," said Michael R. Cowen, the senator's attorney. "We will file a motion to quash the indictment this week. We look forward to having the opportunity to have an independent, competent prosecutor review the facts, and are confident that once that happens these baseless charges will be dismissed."

1. Guerra earned the nickname “Great Emancipator” after dismissing hundreds of driving while intoxicated charges. *Willacy DA Wants to be Jailed – Again*, San Antonio Express-News, February 22, 2007, available on-line at http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/MYSA022207_01A_DA_guerra_127c61e_html20155.html. According to state statistics, Guerra only convicted 36% of those charged , and dismissed 43% of the criminal cases he handled. Robert Wilcox, *Guerra’s Prosecutorial Record is Weaker than Former D.A. Gus Garza*, Raymondville Chronicle/Willacy County News, February 27, 2008, available on-line at <http://www.raymondvillechroniclenews.com/news/2008/0227/news/014.html>.
2. Robert Wilcox, *\$876 Thousand in Legal Fees from Guerra’s Lawsuits Hand Over the Taxpayers*, Raymondville Chronicle/Willacy County News, February 27, 2008, available on-line at http://www.raymondvillechroniclenews.com/news/2008/0227/Front_page/001.html.
3. Robert Wilcox, *\$876 Thousand in Legal Fees from Guerra’s Lawsuits Hand Over the Taxpayers*, Raymondville Chronicle/Willacy County News, February 27, 2008, available on-line at http://www.raymondvillechroniclenews.com/news/2008/0227/Front_page/001.html.
4. Robert Wilcox, *\$876 Thousand in Legal Fees from Guerra’s Lawsuits Hand Over the Taxpayers*, Raymondville Chronicle/Willacy County News, February 27, 2008, available on-line at http://www.raymondvillechroniclenews.com/news/2008/0227/Front_page/001.html.
5. Fernando Del Valle, *Cases Start Getting Dismissed in Willacy County as DA Continues His “Circus,”* Brownsville Herald, February 21, 2007, available online at <http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/onset?id=77&template=article.html>