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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
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Re: Charges Filed Against Palmer Moland After Fairfax School District Board Investigation

BAKERSFIELD – District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced today, September 27, 2022, that the Kern County District Attorney’s Office has filed criminal charges against Palmer Moland, a member of the Fairfax School District’s Board of Trustees. Mr. Moland has been charged with six felony counts, including the misappropriation of public funds, violating conflict of interest statutes, falsification of election documents and voter fraud. The charges are the product of an investigation conducted by the District Attorney’s Public Integrity Unit after allegations of misconduct were reported by the Kern County Grand Jury as well as an audit conducted by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team. Palmer Moland was arrested by Investigators with the Kern County District Attorney’s Office Public Integrity Unit on September 27, 2022.

The charges allege that Palmer Moland, in his position as a member of the Fairfax School Board, ignored bylaws that restrict the expenditure of funds to hire a law firm at district expense to quash a motion to censure him as well as to limit his own exposure to public records requests related to the censure. Additionally, it is alleged that Mr. Moland’s vote to employ the additional law firm with district funds presented a financial conflict of interest that Moland was obligated to avoid by abstaining from the vote, which was ultimately decided by a one-vote margin.

Additional charges allege that Mr. Moland did not reside within the Fairfax School District when he ran for office, as well as during the years in which he has been a member of the school board. Residency within the district is a core criterion to qualify for office the office that Mr. Moland holds. The charges allege that Moland reported living within the district when he submitted filings with the Kern County Elections Department to qualify to run for office, but that Moland actually resided in other locations outside the district boundaries. The charges allege that documents that Moland filed with the Elections Department in 2018 as well as in August of 2022 falsely indicated that he resided within the district, thus allowing him to run for an office that he was not qualified to hold. Charges relating to voter fraud also allege that Moland submitted voter registrations identifying his residence as an address that was not his

actual residence and that he subsequently voted in elections in 2018 and 2020.

Amongst the potential penalties for the charged offenses is a permanent disqualification from holding public office. Palmer Moland is presumed innocent unless and until the charges are proven in court beyond a reasonable doubt.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the filing, stating; “Elected public officials hold positions that demand the public’s trust. When a public official obtains and holds such a position through deceptive and unlawful practices, the District Attorney’s Public Integrity Unit will investigate and take actions necessary to hold offenders accountable.”