



Board Agenda Item 35

DATE: March 3, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Hollis Magill, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Resolutions Rejecting Claims for Damages

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Adopt Resolutions Rejecting Claims for Damages

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. After evaluation by the Claims Review Committee, submitted claims are presented to the Board with recommendations for action. If the claim is in the County's jurisdiction, the Summary of Claims denotes the affected supervisorial district.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

For any claim, your Board could choose not to approve the Claims Review Committee's recommendations, and instead direct staff to allow, compromise, settle, or further investigate the claim.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. Payment of claims and the cost of defending claims are charged to the Department's Org 8925, Risk Management Internal Services Fund. The Fund is supported by annual budgetary contributions from County departments based on actuarial projections.

DISCUSSION:

The Board has delegated authority to the Human Resources Director to allow, reject, compromise, or settle claims for damages covered by the County's self-insured program or excess liability insurance in amounts up to \$50,000 pursuant to Chapter 5.02 of the County's Ordinance Code. Similarly, the board has delegated authority to the County Administrative Officer to settle or compromise claims up to the same amount. Claims exceeding that amount are referred to your Board after evaluation by the Claims Review Committee (CRC). The CRC considers various claim elements, which include jurisdiction, allocation of fault, immunities, and compliance with the Government Claims Act by claimants. The CRC consists of the Human Resources Director, Assistant Director of Human Resources, Risk Management staff, and a Chief Deputy County Counsel.

For all claims, a reserve is established, which is estimated by Risk Management to be sufficient to pay the cost of investigating and defending the claim, and to pay any damages for which the County is liable.

After evaluation by the CRC, claims exceeding the authority of the Human Resources Director and the County Administrative Officer are presented to the Board with a recommendation for action on each claim. Upon rejection of a claim, the claimant has six months to file a lawsuit against the County for damages based on the claim.

The CRC has reviewed the claims that are summarized briefly below, and rejection is recommended for each claim.

Claims

<u>Claim No.:</u>	<u>Claimant(s)</u>
GHC0090608	Jennifer Ortega
GHC0090830	Jesse Martin Gonzalez and Iris Jeannette Gonzalez
GHC0092055	Chad Schmidt
GHC0092546	Ayla Noyola
GHC0092565	Larry Torrez Junior
GHC0092567	Raviinder Singh Gill
GHC0092890	Ekam Hundal
GHC0092894	Slyvie Sellers

Summary of Claims

Jennifer Ortega - Claimant claims \$1,000,000 and alleges she was terminated shortly after reporting her supervisor's alleged workplace violence, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant was employed by the County of Fresno and worked in the office of the Board of Supervisors. Claimant is represented by attorney Peter Bradley. This incident is alleged to have occurred in District 3.

Jesse Martin Gonzalez and Iris Jeannette Gonzalez - Claimants each claim \$1,000,000 and allege a Big Fresno Fair employee failed to notice claimants were in front of a metal gate and opened the gate causing them to get injured, which was the proximate cause of the claimants' injuries. Claimants are represented by the law firm Bauman Law. This incident does not involve the County of Fresno because the County does not own or maintain the Big Fresno Fair or its property, and its employees are not County employees.

Chad Schmidt - Claimant claims in excess of \$10,000 and alleges he reported violations of law and regulations and was subjected to retaliation, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant is an employee of the County of Fresno and works in the Department of Information Technology Services. Claimant is not represented by an attorney. This incident is alleged to have occurred in District 3.

Ayla Noyola - Claimant claims an unspecified amount and alleges an officer drove through a red light and hit her vehicle, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant is represented by attorney Edward Fanucchi. This incident does not involve the County of Fresno because it is alleged to have involved the City of Fresno Police Department.

Larry Torrez Junior - Claimant claims \$1,500,000 and alleges a Sheriff deputy was called to assist in removing a man from underneath his vehicle who had spilled COVID-19 on himself, and instead the deputy unlawfully detained him, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. The Sheriff report indicated there was no one underneath the vehicle and that the claimant exhibited concerning behavior. He was transported by ambulance for a mental health evaluation. Claimant is not represented by an attorney. This incident is alleged to have occurred in District 1.

Raviinder Singh Gill - Claimant claims in excess of \$35,000 (the jurisdictional amount for limited civil cases) and alleges he was wrongfully terminated after he filed formal complaints regarding alleged religious discrimination, workplace safety violations, and wage grievances, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant was employed by the County of Fresno and worked in the office of the County Clerk/Registrar of Voters. Claimant is not represented by an attorney. This incident is alleged to have occurred in District 3.

Ekam Hundal - Claimant claims \$2,000,000 and alleges excessive force was used by a Parlier Police officer during his arrest, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant is represented by attorney Jasmine Sandhu. This incident does not involve the County of Fresno because it is alleged to have involved City of Parlier Police Department.

Slyvie Sellers - Claimant claims \$300,000 and alleges she tripped over a raised sidewalk at or near the location of 6537 N. Wishon Avenue, Fresno, CA, which was the proximate cause of the claimant's injuries. Claimant is represented by attorney Wayne Green. This incident is alleged to have occurred in District 2.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Resolutions Rejecting Claims for Damages (8)

CAO ANALYST:

Sevag Tateosian