

FREMONT COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RESPONDS TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY MOLLY CHILSON'S PLEA BARGAIN DECISION IN PEOPLE V. KATIE BARR.

On Wednesday, May 30, 2018, 11th J.D. District Attorney Molly Chilson proudly stood before a District Court Judge and declared that Fremont County Clerk and Recorder Katie Barr should be forgiven for using public funds in excess of \$200,000 for her own personal benefit. D.A. Chilson's plea bargain forgave Barr for writing five bad checks for large sums of cash taken from public funds. The Fremont County Commissioners are appalled that the decision of the District Attorney now will allow Katie Barr to return to work and, once again, be in control of public money. The Commissioners are deeply disappointed by D.A. Chilson's attempt to justify her decision by blaming the County Commissioners, the County Attorney, and the Canon City Police Department.

Ms. Barr admittedly wrote five insufficient funds checks to Fremont County in excess of \$10,000 and circulated public funds through various accounts to cover shortfalls in personal finances for years. She apparently used her position of authority to cover it up, and in the opinion of the Board of Commissioners, betrayed the public trust. As far as the Commissioners are aware, D.A. Chilson did not verify any facts or discuss her decision with any County Official, including the County Commissioners and County Attorney, before announcing it to the court and abruptly ending the case.

The County did not protect Clerk Barr, but instead reported the activity to law enforcement for investigation. The Canon City Police Department investigated the activity with the assistance of the FBI, and ultimately secured an arrest warrant, demonstrating to the court that probable cause existed to support at least three felony criminal charges. The County Commissioners called upon Ms. Barr to resign her position and took a unanimous vote of "no confidence." D.A. Chilson, in the exercise of her "prosecutorial discretion," chose to abandon any effort to pursue felony charges. Her decision is final and the case is closed.

D.A. Chilson's decision to excuse Ms. Barr's behavior has far-reaching consequences. The citizens of Fremont County trusted the D.A. to guard and protect the public trust. The D.A. has a heightened public duty and obligation to hold elected officials with fiduciary responsibilities to a higher standard of accountability. Demonstrating civility and respect towards the public helps ensure the public's trust in the efficiency and effectiveness of government. Chilson's statement "justifying" her decision to forgive Ms. Barr contains incorrect information and demonstrates fundamental ignorance of the daily operations of County government. It is an attempt to publicly disgrace the very county officials who were begging for justice to be served. The D.A.'s decision is not justified; it is shameful. The citizens of Fremont County deserve better.