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Press
Release

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**San Diego County Employees Retirement Association
acts to protect its members' safety**

SAN DIEGO, CA – San Diego County Employees Retirement Association (SDCERA) today reiterated its commitment to protect its members' safety and uphold their confidentiality. The California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility (CFFR) recently requested the names and pension benefits of SDCERA's members. SDCERA responded to CFFR's request while still protecting its members' privacy and security. CFFR has filed a lawsuit claiming SDCERA did not supply sufficient information.

SDCERA's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and "Facts at a Glance" disclose the number of retirees receiving benefits, the benefit amounts, average member benefits and average benefits by years of service. Both documents are readily accessible on the organization's website at www.sdcer.org. The median annual benefit is less than \$22,000, and only about two percent of retirees receive annual benefits of \$100,000 or more.

The request made by CFFR asked for the names and monthly pension payments of each member receiving benefits equivalent to \$100,000 or more. Other groups have requested even broader information, including names, addresses, date of birth, age of retirement, last-held job and title, salary at retirement and other personal details of retired members, regardless of their benefit package.

“SDCERA is an integrity-driven organization committed to operating in an open and transparent manner. We have provided the data necessary for the public to review and assess the pension benefits received by our members,” stated Brian White, Chief Executive Officer. “Our retired members are private citizens who are no longer working in public life. Releasing their names and other personal details would leave them open for identity theft, home invasion and other fraud.”

According to AARP, financial elder abuse and fraud affects more than five million older Americans each year and is becoming more common across the country as predators target seniors through telemarketing, the Internet and direct mail.

Furthermore, SDCERA is obligated under California state law to maintain the confidentiality of member records. The County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (1937 Act), Government Code Section 31532, states

Sworn statements and individual records of members shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone except insofar as may be necessary for the administration of this chapter or upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction, or upon written authorization of the member.

“While some may claim that court rulings have negated privacy stipulations, these decisions have neither addressed the law’s unique confidentiality provision nor been confirmed by appellate courts. Until such cases are fully vetted, we will continue to abide by the legislative statutes and protect our members’ privacy,” explained White. “As the guardian of a public pension fund, SDCERA provides our members with outstanding service while safeguarding their assets. To this end, our duties are to protect our members’ best interests, uphold their confidentiality and follow applicable law to the best of our ability.”

About SDCERA

The San Diego County Employees Retirement Association (SDCERA) is an independent association established by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. SDCERA provides retirement and associated benefits for eligible employees of the County of San Diego and other participating employers, and is responsible for collecting, depositing, investing and managing the retirement funds. The SDCERA team is responsible for the accounting of contributions and investment income under the direction and governance of the Board of Retirement. SDCERA also provides a wide range of member services to more than 36,000 active, deferred and retired members. For more information, please visit www.sdcera.org.

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