

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: **Thomas Russell,**
Spokesperson, Public Relations Officer
CUSD Recall Committee
(949) 294-8386 or (949) 459-1220

March 24, 2008
For Immediate Release



Announcing The “P.M. Reform Slate” Reform CUSD -- “Before It’s Too Late”

Palazzo & Maddox Endorsed by CUSD Recall Committee

Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. **Sue Palazzo and Ken Maddox** announced today their candidacy for seats on the Capistrano Unified School District (“CUSD”) Board of Trustees in the upcoming recall election. The CUSD Recall Committee proudly endorses **Palazzo & Maddox – the “P.M. Reform Slate” Candidates.**

After an exhaustive search for the very best candidates, the CUSD Recall Committee is confident that **Palazzo & Maddox** will put the best interests of the children and the taxpayers above all other interests in each decision they make. We are also confident these reform candidates will ask the tough questions, hold the CUSD administrative staff accountable for their actions, and work to create a transparent organization that is responsive to the community.

Palazzo & Maddox will each bring a wide spectrum of impressive personal and professional talents that will make them uniquely qualified and ready to serve as CUSD Trustees once they are elected to replace the disgraced incumbents in the upcoming recall election. They possess qualities and experience the existing CUSD Trustees clearly lack.

For example, **Sue Palazzo** is a school teacher with more than thirty years of experience in our public schools – she is a staunch supporter of public education. **Ken Maddox** is a former member of the California State Assembly, the co-author of the state legislation requiring school class size reduction, a veteran police officer and “DARE officer” (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) in our nearby schools. **Palazzo & Maddox** are each well-known and well-respected critics of the current CUSD leadership – they both played key roles in the original 2005 CUSD Recall campaign and have continued to support the on-going community campaign to restore honesty, integrity and accountability to the CUSD Board of Trustees and administration.

Palazzo & Maddox are absolutely committed to reforming and restoring honesty, integrity and accountability at the Capistrano Unified School District.

Two of the seven existing CUSD Trustee seats are up for election in the upcoming recall election.

Sue Palazzo is running to replace disgraced incumbent Marlene Draper for the 2nd District seat.
Ken Maddox is running to replace disgraced incumbent Sheila Benecke for the 5th District seat.

Short biographies and a picture of each of the Trustee candidates comprising the “P.M. Reform Slate” of **Palazzo & Maddox** are attached.

The grounds for the recall are available at www.cusdrecall.com and read as follows:

“You have permitted a culture of corruption to infect our school district.

You permitted district personnel to use scarce district resources to create unlawful lists of your political “enemies” -- including children. You engaged in illegal closed session meetings where district business was conducted in secret. You and your staff repeatedly provided false information to the public regarding district finances. You failed to effectively control your staff – even giving your former superintendent (now indicted for multiple felonies) a standing ovation and lucrative retirement package just hours after police investigators armed with search warrants raided his office.

You grossly mismanaged district finances.

You are recklessly spending \$52,000,000 on an administration building and over \$140,000,000 for a single high school next to a dump -- while our schools are in dire need of repairs and students are crammed into substandard portable classrooms with non-functioning restrooms. Your reckless deficit spending has created a self-inflicted, multi-million dollar budget crisis that has put our children at risk and resulted in massive program cutbacks – overcrowding classrooms and severely diminishing the quality of education.

You have arrogantly disregarded the public by repeatedly ignoring problems until they become crises.

You have broken the public’s trust.”

CUSD is one of the largest school districts in the State of California. Founded in 1965, the district serves seven cities and several unincorporated areas in South Orange County, including, San Clemente, Dana Point, San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, Mission Viejo, Coto de Caza, Wagon Wheel, Las Flores and Ladera Ranch. Approximately 50,000 children are enrolled in CUSD public schools.

In 2005, the CUSD Recall Committee led South Orange County residents in the unprecedented campaign to recall all seven elected Trustees of the Capistrano Unified School District. More than 177,000 signatures were obtained from South Orange County residents calling for the removal of all seven CUSD Trustees.

In November 2006, the CUSD Recall Committee’s three “ABC Reform Slate” candidates (Ellen Addonizio, Anna Bryson and Larry Christensen) were elected to the CUSD Board of Trustees by landslide margins of victory.

In May 2007, as part of the on-going criminal investigation of the CUSD leaders, former CUSD Superintendent James Fleming was indicted on three felony counts (misappropriation of public funds, use of school funds to improperly defeat the CUSD Recall Committee’s 2005 recall campaign, and conspiracy). If convicted, Fleming could serve up to four years in prison.

The CUSD Recall Committee is leading the current campaign to recall CUSD Trustees Benecke and Draper for creating a culture of corruption at CUSD and for gross fiscal mismanagement.

To learn more about these important issues, please visit our website at www.cusdrecall.com or contact:

Thomas K. Russell

Spokesperson, CUSD Recall Committee

Telephone: (949) 459-1220

Facsimile: (949) 459-1217

Email: cusdrecall@cox.net