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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2018

LITIGATION

HARMEET K. DHILLON

DHILLON LAW GROUP INC. | SAN FRANCISCO

SPECIALTY: FIRST AMENDMENT, BUSINESS MATTERS

From the stage at San Jose’s McEnery Convention Center, Dhillon gave the Pledge of Allegiance to start a political rally on June 2, 2016, as part of Donald J. Trump’s presidential campaign. Later, she met the candidate backstage. Then she exited the building — and met fierce opposition from anti-Trump protesters outside. Dhillon, a veteran Republican Party operative, said it was scary.

“There was rioting, people holding 6-foot Mexican flags, bags of rocks thrown at the rally goers,” Dhillon said. “My husband and I and my law partner took shelter in Il Fornaio,” a nearby restaurant, “but not before we were spat at and chased.”

The problem was, she claimed in the civil rights lawsuit she filed against police and the city soon after on behalf of 20 plaintiffs similarly menaced by the crowd, San Jose police stood by looking on and did not intervene as the attendees were “battered by several anti-Trump protesters,” “struck in the head and face,” “kicked in the back” and “otherwise harassed and assaulted.” Worse, the police allegedly prevented attendees from escaping the mob.

U.S. District Judge Lucy H. Koh denied San Jose’s bid for qualified immu-

nity; a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel unanimously affirmed Koh in late July. San Jose has announced it will seek en banc review and, if that fails, will petition for certiorari at the U.S. Supreme Court. *Hernandez v. City of San Jose*, 17-15576 (9th Cir., filed July 14, 2016).

“My husband and I are from India, and this is the sort of behavior you see in third-world countries like India,” Dhillon said. “I’ve been a conservative civil rights activist my entire career. It was completely outrageous, and it all happened after we thanked the cops for security as we left the convention center and told them how blue lives matter.”

Dhillon was prepping for a Sept. 17 trial in which she plans to defend the constitutionality of California’s bail system as it stood before Aug. 28, when Gov. Brown signed legislation to revamp it. She successfully moved to intervene in the case for the California Bail Agents Association to challenge plaintiffs’ attack on what they call a “wealth-based pre-trial detention scheme” on due process and equal protection grounds. *Buffin v. City and County of San Francisco*, 4:15-cv-04959 (N.D. Cal., filed Oct. 28, 2015).

“There was some noise from the plaintiffs that maybe the case is moot after the governor signed SB 10,” she said.



“Our position is let’s go ahead and get a ruling on bail laws’ constitutionality. People on the right are of course opposed to letting accused criminals out without bail.”

— John Roemer