



August 14, 2000

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Mercedes Rivera
Publisher/Editor
Los Tiempos Newspaper
P.O. Box 650806
Miami, FL 33265

RE: REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION 00-126

Dear Ms. Rivera:

The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust considered your request for an advisory opinion at its meeting on August 11th, 2000 and rendered its opinion based on the facts stated in your letter.

You requested an opinion regarding your newspaper's ability to contract with the county for advertising.

In your letter, you advised the Commission that in 1998, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution that provided for publication of certain required public notices in community newspapers. In 1999, the Miami-Dade Department of Communication refused to place any advertising with the paper because the publisher, Jorge Rojas, was a county employee. However, you are now the owner and publisher of the paper and you are not a county employee.

The Commission found The Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance permits the Miami-Dade Communications Department to contract with Los Tiempos for advertising. Section 2-11.1(c) and 2-11.1(d) only restrict county employees and other officials from

contracting with the county to provide services. Since you are the sole owner of the publication and you are not a county employee, you may contract with the Communications Department for advertising as long as you retain ownership of the publication.

This opinion construes the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance only and is not applicable to any conflict under state law. Please contact the State of Florida Commission on Ethics if you have any questions regarding possible conflicts under state law.

If you have any questions regarding this opinion, please call the undersigned at (305) 579-2594 or Ardyth Walker, Staff General Counsel at (305) 579-2653.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Meyers", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

ROBERT MEYERS
Executive Director