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*The object of this paper is not only independence, but permanence
- from the 1st edition of the Sacramento Daily Bee, Feb. 3, 1857*

Bee publisher issues statement on carrier ruling

SACRAMENTO, CA – Cheryl Dell, publisher and president of *The Sacramento Bee*, today released the following statement:

On Monday, the Sacramento County Superior Court issued a tentative ruling that a group of *Sacramento Bee* newspaper carriers were misclassified as independent contractors. *The Sacramento Bee* plans to contest the ruling, including appealing it if necessary. For the record, this case is only about mileage – whether or not the carriers have been fairly compensated for their mileage – all wage and hour claims have been dismissed. This finding is the first step in answering that question.

The Bee is extremely disappointed in the decision and strongly believes that the individual newspaper carriers were properly classified as independent contractors. Our classification of carriers as independent contractors is in full compliance with regulations issued directly to the newspaper industry by the state of California. The state regulations set forth specific compliance measures required of newspaper companies for proper independent contractor classification and *The Bee* consistently followed these regulations. In fact, both *The Sacramento Bee* and *The Fresno Bee* were audited by the state of California and both newspapers were found to be in full compliance with the governing regulations.

The fact that any company that has diligently complied with state-provided regulations can later come under attack for that very same conduct is simply a failure of justice. I was in court every day of the trial. The evolution of the case has demonstrated that the case is not about the newspaper carriers; it is about lining the pockets of class action plaintiff lawyers. Plaintiffs' counsel in this case, Callahan & Blaine, asked the court to bar any testimony from the newspaper carriers themselves. *The Bee* fought for the right of the newspaper carriers to testify, believing that the carriers best understand their own circumstances. During the trial, Callahan & Blaine did not call one newspaper carrier to the stand. *The Bee* called several dozen newspaper carriers to the witness stand and their testimony was overwhelmingly consistent with the independent contractor status. And, the plaintiffs relentlessly fought *The Bee*'s efforts to take this case before a jury, ultimately convincing the court to deny *The Bee* this right.

In light of the evidence and *The Bee*'s strict adherence to state regulations, this tentative ruling is bewildering. *The Bee* has vigorously defended against this lawsuit for the past five years and our robust defense will continue. Because the litigation is ongoing, that is all I can say at this point.