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**SUPREME COURT DECISION ABSOLVES EL PASO COUNTY
GOVERNMENT FROM PAYING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
County Attorney litigates successfully before nation's highest court**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez announced today that the U. S. Supreme Court declined to consider an appeal filed by the widow of an inmate who died in the El Paso County Detention Facility in 1997. The widow, Jesse Dorado, filed a lawsuit against El Paso County claiming that various detention officers and medical staff of the El Paso jail violated the inmate's constitutional rights by failing to provide medical attention to her husband, a Mexican physician whose family claimed he suffered from seizure disorder

In June 2003, a jury awarded \$2.5 Million dollars to the widow and her husband's estate, an amount that with interest and court costs amounted to around \$5 million dollars at the time of the appeal and that today would amount to nearly \$6 million dollars. Two years later, on September 16, 2005, the Texas 8th Court of Appeals reversed the judgment, ruling there was insufficient evidence to hold the County liable. Ms. Dorado then unsuccessfully appealed to Texas Supreme Court and then to the United States Supreme Court. Had Ms. Dorado won her appeal, the money would have been paid out of County general funds.

The case originated from an incident that occurred on February 27, 1997. That evening, Eduardo Miranda, a physician living in El Paso but practicing medicine in Juarez, Mexico, was arrested for outstanding traffic warrants and a DWI probation violation. Once booked into the El Paso County detention facility, Mr. Miranda informed jail personnel he had a history of convulsions but did not initially inform them that he was under medication for his condition. Two days later he suffered a seizure and was immediately taken to the clinic. Within minutes of the seizure, Miranda died of a heart attack.

The appeal of this case was pending since 2004 and the County Auditor Ed Dion had been setting aside millions of dollars in the general fund in the event that an unfavorable decision forced the County government to pay the full amount of the judgment. Based on the legal

assessment of the County Attorney's Office, the money was returned to the general fund for immediate use at the beginning of fiscal year 2007.

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez stated he is satisfied with the Supreme Court's decision because it has always been the County's position that there was no violation of the inmate's civil rights. "While it is a tragedy that this family lost their family member, the jail personnel took the necessary steps to attend to his medical needs. We felt very strongly that the County taxpayers should not be strapped with a \$5 million dollar judgment."

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