

Peace group seeks investigation for Molina  
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OROVILLE — A Chico peace group is requesting a state investigation into claims of police brutality in an attempt to end a ridge man's 16-day-old hunger strike.

Sue Hilderbrand, director of the Chico Peace and Justice Center, said Wednesday the group plans to hand deliver a letter to the California Attorney General's Office in Sacramento this week, asking it to view a surveillance video of a violent arrest outside an Oroville casino in 2000.

Fidel Molina, 55, of Paradise, whose stepson was arrested after being ousted from the casino for being intoxicated, charges a sheriff's deputy lied on the witness stand about the amount of force used.

A Butte County jury subsequently found there was no excessive force, but reduced felony charges against Molina's stepson to a misdemeanor.

Molina, who refuses to consume anything but water and salt packets, also is asking the state to investigate the circumstances of a mistrial that was declared in his own resisting arrest case in 2005.

In that incident, Molina, his stepson and a 15-year-old grandson, were held at gunpoint in front of some of Molina's jurors in front of the courthouse, after an employee in the District Attorney's Office claimed to have seen the stepson place what later turned out to be a hunting knife in Molina's car during a break in the older man's trial.

Molina vows he won't end his hunger strike until the attorney general agrees to view the casino arrest video and compare it to transcripts of the  
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officer's testimony on the witness stand.

The grainy black and white surveillance video shows two sheriff's deputies wrestling with Molina's stepson, Andy Fulton Jr., employing what they testified to were a few "distraction" blows with their batons, and also using a carotid choke hold until the man passed out.

The officers claimed they were forced to take that action because the inebriated man continued to fight them after slipping his handcuffs from his back to his front.

Members of the Peace and Justice Center have visited Molina at the City Plaza, where he is staging the public hunger strike, and agreed to show the surveillance video to anyone interested at their Broadway headquarters last Friday.

Molina said Wednesday he is beginning to feel the effects of not eating for more than two weeks.

"I'm feeling a little woozy and my legs are kind of rubbery," he said. He also said his vision is "a little fuzzy."

He says that for the most part the public has been supportive. Some people have brought him water and ice, though he has turned down offers of vitamin supplements and even an orange.

"That would be cheating," he said.

Molina, who also has sent two letters to the Attorney General's Office asking them to investigate his complaint, said Wednesday that if they tell the Peace and Justice Center representatives they will agree to do so, he will start eating again.

But Molina stressed he would only do so because he doesn't know how long it would take for the actual investigation to begin.

Hilderbrand said her group is also concerned about several recent fatal shootings by law enforcement officers in Butte County, though their primary focus is on Molina's case.

"Our board feels there is police brutality and that people are entitled to an outside investigation where there is apparent wrongdoing," said Hilderbrand.