

## THE CALIFORNIA NAME ACT

I represent a local Christian college. Like a lot of people, they frequently do not know when I am serious. Recently they asked me to prepare an easement for a man with an unusual name. It produced this exchange of e-mails.

TO: Mr. Bowden:

We have a neighbor named Sergio Dioszegiti who parks his cars on our property. Based on your former advice, we want to establish that his use of our land is permissive and not adverse. Would you please prepare the usual license or notice of consent to use land?

Client

TO: Client:

I am attaching the document you asked me to prepare. I don't like the name Dioszegeti. Please ask him to change it to, I don't know, maybe Dios or just Zegi? Dioszegeti seems excessive. When you mention that he is going to have to make that minor name change, you might also tell him about the California Name Act (CNA). This is an as yet unenacted statute I am working on. The CNA will prohibit the annoying use of confusing names. For example, it will prohibit the use of last names as first names and vice-versa. We have a Commissioner in this county called Irwin Joseph. That bassakwards name needs to be against the law. The CAN will also prohibit names that are hard for me to pronounce or spell. I brook no contradiction when I say it is rude to use a name that chronologically challenged white males of vaguely mongrelized northern European origin, guys like me in other words, find hard to remember, pronounce or write. Hard names are even worse than names that are used in the wrong order. The CNA will put a stop to that.

Take my friend Sandor Nagyszalanczy. He is Hungarian. He admits that only Hungarians can pronounce his name, let alone spell it. And yet he persists in using it. I don't want to ask this too loud, but you gotta wonder: how did he get into this country in the first place? I thought problems like his got ironed out on Ellis Island. Names like Nagyszalanczy are not just annoying. They fail to serve the whole purpose behind having names. That purpose is so I, or people very much like me, can identify the person being named by writing or speaking a simple word-symbol. I tell him: "Sandor" I say, "change your name to 'Lancy' or I will have to introduce you to Commissioner [Joseph Irwin] (see how easy that was?) and find out what he thinks about it."

Names like mine, or any of the founding fathers, George, Ben, Tom, John, Alex et al. work just fine. Melting Pot my eye! We don't need all these highfalutin new foreign names I never heard before and can't remember a second after I hear them. They all need to be changed to names on a list I have prepared. It's a short list too. Who ever heard of a name like Condoleezza? If George Forman can name all of his six kids George Forman, even the girls, why can't we get along in this country with a really short list of acceptable names? Well, I could be slightly incorrect, because I like the name Barack Obama. Now there is a name. Wow! It almost changes my mind about the whole issue. I guess we need an exception for guys with really good names even if

they are unusual. Such persons could apply for a "name variance." We could have 3 or 4 easy administrative findings. I suggest these:

“ The Name Czar may grant a ‘Name Variance’ if:

a) taken separately, the first and last proposed name contains six or fewer letters per name, b) neither name uses more than three different vowels and four consonants, c) the last name can be written intelligibly by a reservation clerk over the telephone without the need to spell it more than once out loud, and d) the last name can be pronounced on the second try by a native born two (Ok, three) year old child who is unrelated to the applicant by blood or marriage. No variance may be granted, however, for names containing the letters Z or Q, and the letter X is a wobbler. Any applicant who proposes a two word name combination containing two or more Z’s in either name shall be placed under close arrest and surrendered to the nearest prison. And, Oh yeah, no hyphenated names allowed”

That should cover guys with names like Barack Obama. It would also weed out most of the misfits with names like Dioszegeti and Nagyszalanczy.

Well [client], my lunch period is just about over. The nurses are taking the old ladies back to their rooms. Pretty soon they will wheel me into the "Sun Room" for my afternoon nap. So I need to stop now. Besides I think I have wet myself in the excitement of writing this letter. Feels kinda good though, all warm and moist. Only problem is that after a while it always turns cold. I hate a cold damp crotch.

Bowden

The e-mail prompted the following response:

TO: Mr. Bowden:

In response to your last e-mail, it is fortunate that we did not know you personally before we engaged you as our attorney.

Client.