

Rachel Hill says she hasn't formally conceded Fresno County judge's race, clarifies statement issued Friday

By Carmen George

Rachel Hill

ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — Fresno Bee Staff Photo [Buy Photo](#)

Fresno County Superior Court judge candidate Rachel Hill said Saturday she did not intend to concede defeat when she released a statement Friday evening that said “best of luck” to her opponent, Lisa Gamoian, “as she assumes her new role.”

Hill provided the statement to KGPE (Channel 47.1), which reported in a headline online that Hill had conceded.

Hill, who was unavailable for comment Friday, told The Bee on Saturday that she is not withdrawing from the race. Her statement was meant only as an acknowledgment that “I concede that it is highly unlikely” to win the race and that “I do anticipate Ms. Gamoian will assume the role of Superior Court judge.”

On Saturday afternoon, she shared a similar statement to the one released Friday night: “Best of luck to Ms. Gamoian as she assumes the awesome responsibility of her new role.”

Earlier Saturday, Hill said of her Friday statement: “It really wasn’t a real concession, but what I feel at this point.” Hill said she doesn’t want her supporters waiting on “pins and needles” but that “there is always the possibility the last vote that gets counted turns out to be in my favor.”

The latest vote count released Friday afternoon had Gamoian 3,602 votes ahead, with 51.2% to Hill’s 48.4%. Hill would need to win nearly 60% of the remaining uncounted ballots to overtake Gamoian. Election records show Hill has never risen above 50% of the vote. Fresno County’s next update of vote totals will be at 3 p.m. Wednesday.

Hill said she called and left a message for Gamoian on Friday night.

Gamoian’s campaign consultant, Tim Orman, didn’t discuss that message. He only repeated what he said Friday: “We’re highly optimistic that Lisa Gamoian will be the next elected Superior Court judge in Fresno County.”

Hill said she was informed by her campaign manager that “irrespective” of her statements, “the vote will be what the vote will be.”

Campaign manager Julie Griffiths said Hill’s statements can’t affect “the fact the ballots have to be legally counted.” Hill’s statements, wishing Gamoian well before the final tally, are “standard every-day operation” in political races, Griffiths said.

Hill said media calls to her cellphone this week requesting additional information weren’t received because her phone disappeared on election night at the Elbow Room Bar & Grill.

In her statement Saturday, Hill wrote: “I am deeply honored by all of the remarkable support I have received during this campaign. ... The scope of this judicial campaign has been unprecedented in Fresno County. ...



“I will continue to be active in the legal community and am excited to continue to pursue opportunities in public service. The justice system is best served when people refuse to give in to cynicism and hold true to the ideals upon which the system was based. Our community is blessed to have so many who have tirelessly dedicated themselves to those ideals.”

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