

68. Regarding the forces on  $q_3$  exerted by  $q_1$  and  $q_2$ , one must “push” and the other must “pull” in order that the net force is zero; hence,  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  have opposite signs. For individual forces to cancel, their magnitudes must be equal:

$$k \frac{|q_1| |q_3|}{(L_{12} + L_{23})^2} = k \frac{|q_2| |q_3|}{(L_{23})^2}.$$

With  $L_{23} = 2.00L_{12}$  , the above expression simplifies to  $\frac{|q_1|}{9} = \frac{|q_2|}{4}$ . Therefore,  $q_1 = -9q_2/4$ , or  $q_1/q_2 = -2.25$ .