

## **Encino Neighborhood Council – Community Impact Statement: Martinez/deLeon/Cedillo**

### **Filed with: LA City Council & Committees & Human Rights Commission**

The Encino Neighborhood Council (ENC) calls on Councilmembers Martinez, de León, and Cedillo to immediately resign from the Los Angeles City Council. As widely reported by the [LA Times](#) and [Knock LA](#), all three councilmembers engaged in an abhorrent conversation that disparaged and disrespected Councilmember Mike Bonin and his family, other City Councilmembers, the African American community, the redistricting process, and Angelenos everywhere. These three councilmembers should take ownership of their inexcusable actions and immediately resign. While resignation will not begin to repair the damage that has been done, it is the first step in showing true accountability and remorse. Los Angeles cannot begin to heal while these three remain in power.

In the event these three councilmembers fail to see the urgency of the need for their resignations, the City Council itself has a duty to act. As the Council President serves at the pleasure of the City Council, a motion must immediately be made to install a new Council President. Councilmember Martinez is not fit to lead the City Council as evidenced by her widely reported, racist, defamatory, disempowering comments and concurrent actions consistent with these comments during the redistricting process and the Council District 10 vacancy.

In addition, City Council must agendize a censure of Councilmembers Martinez, de León and Cedillo, if they fail to resign. Neighborhood council leaders expect a unanimous vote on these censures. Anything less is tantamount to an endorsement of anti-black racism, violence against children, gerrymandering, and power brokering in backroom deals, in violation of the Brown Act.

The current situation is not merely a matter of some errant words spoken in frustration and taken out of context. Instead, the portions of the recording already released are evidence of intentional violation of the law during the redistricting process. Specifically, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Acts requires that redistricting changes can be proven to not have a discriminatory purpose or effect. In the recording released and commented on by the LA Times, we see clear evidence of an overt discriminatory purpose in redistricting proposals which were subsequently adopted. This opens the city to liability and makes urgent the need for a truly independent redistricting commission.

There were multiple examples of discrimination on display that day. Councilmember de León compared an adopted African American child to a luxury handbag. Councilmember Martinez disparaged the Indigenous Oaxacan community in Koreatown saying “I see a lot of little short dark people,” employing stereotypes long used against Oaxacans in Mexico and in the United States. “I was like, I don’t know where these people are from, I don’t know what village they came [from], how they got here,” Martinez said, before adding “Tan feos” - (They’re so ugly). Councilmember Martinez called Councilmember Bonin’s son a “changito - (little monkey)” and expressed that “this kid needs a beat down” regarding his excitement at participating in an MLK Day parade. Throughout the released recordings, there is a deep vein of anti-Black racism that pervades all aspects of the discussion on redistricting.

Neighborhood Councilmembers once again call attention to the unusual circumstances in Council District 10. The choice by CM Nury Martinez to appoint Herb Wesson, who was clearly barred from holding the seat by the City charter. When community members and Councilmembers called out the swift

appointment of Heather Hutt as a backroom deal they were accused by CM Martinez of not wanting to see an African American woman in power. We know now that this appointment was the result of power brokering whose purpose was to benefit CM Martinez, not the stakeholders of Council District 10. That CM Martinez would wield identity politics to create divisive chaos in Council District 10 to hide her backroom deals is fiducially, morally, and ethically reprehensible. This is not the leadership that Angelenos deserve.

The behavior evidenced by Nury Martinez, Kevin de León, and Gil Cedillo would never be tolerated at the Neighborhood Council level. Neighborhood Council members are required to both adhere to a Code of Conduct and take Anti-Bias training as part of our service. The rules around our decorum and training are clear. Equally clear is the double standard that exists for members of the City Council. Were Neighborhood Council members to behave in a similar manner, we would face censure, removal and dismissal by our own board, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners. Indeed, elected officials have been removed from Neighborhood Councils for far less egregious violations than what we are sickened to have listened to here.

CM Martinez has also limited public comment at City Hall in a way that has never been seen before and which would never be tolerated by Neighborhood Councils or the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. She frequently takes the bare minimum of comment allowable under the Brown Act, even when an issue is contentious or important. Her dismissive and contemptuous attitude towards the public has radiated into the Council during her tenure as President, creating an environment where casual racism is accepted without question and systematic racism can flourish. An example of this is when a Black man disrupted the August 10th, 2022, City Council meeting by merely shouting, Councilmember Buscaino flippantly threatened to call DCFS on the man to remove his infant son.

This contempt for public comment also affects Neighborhood Councils. In a Community Impact Statement Townhall earlier this year, Councilmember Martinez promised the Neighborhood Council system a continuation of telephonic comment so that we could share our community impact statements. However, this promise was never fulfilled, and in-person comment returned with no notice or consideration for Neighborhood Council Leaders. This decision speaks deeply to the contempt that Councilmember Martinez has for the public as evidenced by her statements.

The ENC also believes that many of these conversations may also be evidence of violations of the Brown Act. Both redistricting and the Council District 10 appointment were matters that were agendaized in Council, but it is clear that these decisions were being made prior to open and observable Council meetings.

In 2022, we don't expect to hear explicit recordings of literal, systemic racism, recordings of the leaders of City Hall participating in racist, anti-black rhetoric while discussing gerrymandering on the basis of race and socioeconomic status and backroom deals to keep themselves in power.

To Councilpersons Martinez, de León, and Cedillo, resign immediately.

To the rest of our Councilmembers, we call on you to remove Ms. Martinez as President of the City council and immediately agendaize a censure motion for councilmembers Martinez, de León, and Cedillo.