

March 12, 2025

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

I am writing as a concerned citizen who recently witnessed the disturbing behavior displayed during Council Meetings by people in the audience on those making public comment. On Friday, March 7, I attended a committee hearing and signed up for public comment on an issue I feel passionately about. Upon entering the chambers, I realized there was already an altercation between an officer and a man yelling obscenities which already made me feel unsafe. Moments later another man entered the chambers to sit in the audience - that man was wearing a shirt with lewd messaging that made me feel extremely uncomfortable as a woman. The shirt said "Who ate all the pussy." I was with other women who signed up to make public comment and we were appalled by the behavior allowed in chambers.

Once the meeting began, a third man was yelling inappropriate insults to the city councilmembers. When it was time to start public comment, one of the men pulled out a giant prop which can only be described as phallic - which he stroked aggressively. Myself and the other women there to make public comment had to come in close contact with that disturbing behavior on our way to the podium. I cannot imagine anyone feeling comfortable and safe enough to exercise their civic duties while having to experience borderline sexual assault and indecent exposure.

The behavior like this creates a hostile environment that deters participation and undermines the purpose of these forums. Instead of dialogue and problem-solving, time is wasted on chaos and disrespect. The purpose of these meetings should be to listen to different perspectives on what can make our city better.

How much longer do we have to endure this? Council Chambers should be where voices are heard and our time is not wasted. This is our space—a space for the people—and we deserve better.

I urge Councilmembers to take action by setting and enforcing clear expectations for respectful dialogue and professional conduct. Our community deserves a public forum where everyone feels empowered to contribute, free from hostility, intimidation, and lewd behavior.

Sincerely,

Dayana De La Torre

dayanadt@gmail.com

310-738-9362