

Communication from Public

Name: Rafael Vasquez

Date Submitted: 04/19/2024 09:16 AM

Council File No: 23-0751

Comments for Public Posting: On October 12, 2022, incited by the unconscionable racist leaked audio remarks by past Latinx leaders, mayoral candidate Karen Bass stated: Our city has endured a crisis of homelessness, affordability, and public safety for some time and now, in the last 72 hours, another crisis has come to the forefront. Racial divide, racial attacks, and coercive racial politics from some of the most powerful leaders in Los Angeles. It is important to take stock but it's more important to move forward. There needs to be an investigation and those officials must resign but that's not enough. We need a new direction in LA and new leadership that will make sure we reject the politics of divide and conquer. I have spent my life bringing communities together in times of crisis to tackle difficult problems including racial conflicts and especially at this moment we need leaders who will bring Los Angeles together and move the city forward and that is my commitment to my city. The remarks by past Councilmembers Nury Martinez and Gil Cedillo, current member Kevin de León, and former Los Angeles County Federation Leader Ron Herrera, spotlight the frequent race-baiting practice against Oaxacan Angelinos. Differentiating Oaxacans as "little, short dark people" and "indios" overtly perpetuates an asymmetrical social positioning where Indigenous people suffer a racial inferiority complex relative to White supremacy—this practice is commonly used against other Indigenous Latinx people (see recent L.A. Times article, "In Fresno, Sikhs and Oaxacans unite to pass caste discrimination ban" Fresno is the first California city to ban caste discrimination - Los Angeles Times (latimes.com)). When former councilmember Martinez declared, "I don't know where these people are from. Like I don't know what village they came out of, how they got here" sustains a "culture of poverty" thesis claiming Indigenous people are unintelligent and without direction, making it a gasping surprise to learn they are able to leave their communities of origin, let alone travel north. These acts invalidate lives and, further, render pre-Columbian languages inauthentic, exacerbating the "Limited English Proficient" ideology to unjustly devalue home languages as impediments to success. Conducting everyday routine tasks at hospitals to register for a vaccine or filling-out an employment application reveal a pernicious false ethnic/racial dichotomy that excludes Indigenous ancestry for

Mexican and other Latinx migrants. Seemingly benign, covert, and subtle acts of discrimination such as “what’s that dialect?” or “you’re not Black, so check White,” when Black and Indigenous are not mutually exclusive, contributes to harmful cumulative stress and places the burden on Indigenous Mexicans to defend their existence, a source of gaslighting with psychological and epistemic implications. Approximately 800,000 Indigenous Oaxacans reside in Southern California, yet they face harsh experiential and socio-economic conditions. While the poverty rate for Mexican migrants is almost three times as high as that for Whites, 29% v. 11%, among Indigenous Mexicans, 9 in 10 live in poverty. Nearly 23% of Indigenous Mexicans are without health insurance coverage in contrast to 6% of Whites. The emergence of an ethnic/racial divide among Latinx leadership in convergence with endured systemic racism raises an urgent call to the City of Los Angeles to structure opportunities in an effective and equitable manner that uplifts Indigenous wellbeing responsibly. I therefore urge that the Civil Rights, Equity, Aging and Disabilities Committee move forward the Motion (council file: 23-0751) presented by Councilmembers Hernandez and Harris-Dawson and seconded by Councilmember Soto-Martinez to create a commission on the experiences of Indigenous Latinx and Oaxacan communities to ensure meaningful Indigenous city-wide engagement.

Communication from Public

Name: Noe Lopez

Date Submitted: 04/18/2024 11:15 AM

Council File No: 23-0751

Comments for Public Posting: Speaking on the behalf of the Oaxacan people living in California because it is important that our history, politics, and culture are recognized in the United States of America