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<http://www.seiu721.org>

March 18, 2025

President Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Councilmember Eighth District
200 North Los Angeles Street, Room 450
Los Angeles CA, 90012

Dear President Harris-Dawson,

On behalf of the more than 100,000 members of the Service Employees International Union Local 721, I am writing to request that the Los Angeles City Council review and reconsider the practice of allowing members of the public to regularly and frequently engage in vulgar, threatening hate-speech during City Council and Committee meetings.

As you are aware, some members of the public regularly attend these meetings with the obvious intent purpose of disrupting, threatening, and intimidating Council members, City employees, and members of the public who are present or are viewing and listening to the meetings while conducting legitimate City business.

The use of violent, threatening, racist, sexist, and homophobic speech in City meetings, both public and private, is unacceptable.

It is our understanding that for many years the City Attorney has advised that this form of threatening and intimidating behavior may be considered Constitutionally protected 'free speech', however, it is our view that this threatening and intimidating behavior is harmful to the public and potentially creates dangerous working conditions for all City employees including Council members and their staff.

If this level of disruptive, threatening, and potentially dangerous speech were to be exhibited by a city employee or union member in any workplace context, this would not be tolerated by management. This abusive and threatening behavior would violate the City' workplace rules and policies and would be cause for removal from City property and result in disciplinary action.

On behalf of the members of our union I am requesting that you take action to call for a review of the Council Rules (adopted 12/29/1986, and amended 1/2019) Chapter II - Section 7 Public Notice Attendance and Comment – Disruptions, Exclusion From Council Meetings, and Section 12 Rules of Decorum (b) Loud, Threatening and Abusive Language as cause for the exclusion of speakers from a public meeting.

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While the workers of the City of Los Angeles do have the strong protections of a union contract, the Civil Service Rules of the City of Los Angeles and as public employees in the State of California, we ultimately depend on you and your Council colleagues to safeguard our health, safety and wellbeing.

We look forward to engaging with you and the Council on the review of the rules and procedures for the conduct of public meetings to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all is protected.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Green
President
Service Employees International Union Local 721

DG:er