

MOTION

IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS, CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUITY

In 1991, 15 year-old Latasha Harlins visited a local grocery store in South Los Angeles to buy a bottle of orange juice, only to be shot in the back of the head by a convenience store clerk after being accused of stealing. Despite a jury finding the convenience store clerk guilty of voluntary manslaughter and recommending the maximum prison sentence of 16 years, the judge released the clerk on probation and required community service and a \$500 fine. That same year, in 1991, the City of Los Angeles witnessed the brutal beating of Rodney King by four white police officers, who were later acquitted of these unconscionable acts in 1992. Upon their acquittal, the City erupted in pain and grieving for five days during the 1992 Uprising as it became clear that racism regularly stands as a barrier to justice for the City's Black community.

The Rodney King incident resulted in the 1991 Christopher Commission that produced a report demonstrating systemic issues in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in their excessive use of force and tolerance of racism, sexism, and violence. In response to rising racial tensions and mounting high profile cases of anti-black aggression, the City Council declared the City of Los Angeles as a "Racism Free City" in 1993; wherein each individual, adult, and child has the right to be free from discrimination based upon their race, ethnicity, or cultural affiliation (Council File 93-0104).

Less than 30 years later in 2020, the nation mourned as it witnessed a horrific video recording of a white police officer kneeling on the neck of a handcuffed Black man named George Floyd for 9 minutes and 29 seconds as he slowly asphyxiated to death. In the weeks following, Angelenos across the City participated in the largest civil unrest since the 1992 Uprising and made their voices heard—demanding that the City confront issues of racial injustice. That year, the City Council declared racism as a public health crisis and began to work through a racial reckoning to transform our criminal system and address disparities in the health, wealth and wellbeing of Angelenos across the City (Council File 20-0715).

Despite the City's continued commitment to work towards racial justice, on October 9, 2022, the Los Angeles Times reported on statements made in 2021 during a meeting among Councilmembers Nury Martinez, Kevin De Leon, and Gil Cedillo, along with local labor leader Ron Hererra. A secretly recorded tape revealed an extended conversation fraught with blatantly racist and hateful comments that put into question the integrity of our elected officials and their commitment to serve with equity, fairness, and dignity. These actions severely damaged the public's faith in the governance of our City. It also surfaced decades of trauma resulting from a recurring history of exclusion and violence against minority communities in the City of Los Angeles.

It is now necessary for the City of Los Angeles to reaffirm its commitment to recognizing and understanding the deep-seated disparities, harm, and mistrust caused by a legacy of racist and inequitable policies and programs. As a City Council, we must take steps to take responsibility and recommit ourselves to the work of eliminating racial disparities and prioritizing racial equity in our decision making processes. As a City Council, we must restore faith in City government and demonstrate a firm and unyielding commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles City Council reaffirm its January 6, 1993 declaration that the City of Los Angeles is a "Racism Free City" wherein each individual, adult, and child has the right to be free from discrimination based upon their race, ethnicity, or cultural affiliation. Additionally, the City shall recommit itself to encouraging:

1. All schools, places of worship, meeting places, offices, and homes to declare themselves "Racism Free Zones," within which it will be unacceptable to make statements, use symbols, or in any way condone racial stereotypes or prejudices;

PMK

NOV 04 2022

2. All individuals to take a personal pledge which recognizes that racism will cease only when each person understands their own right and responsibility to live in a city where all people are treated equally, with dignity and respect;
3. All ethnic groups to proudly celebrate and share the richness of their culture with others;
4. All community groups, clubs and organizations to devote time to educate and sensitize themselves about the value of rejecting hatred and bigotry; and
5. All people actively encourage elected officials and other "high profile" public figures to promote understanding and harmony, and not engage in racially insensitive acts;

I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles City Council reaffirms its June 24, 2020 declaration that racism is a public health crisis that affects our entire city;

I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles City Council direct the Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department ("Department"), with assistance from other relevant agencies, report back within 30 days with a work program that identifies the funding, staffing, and resources required to establish and manage a "Truth and Reconciliation Committee" (Committee) that will regularly convene over the course of at least one year to engage in a "truth-telling" process that explores and documents racialized, ethnic, or political violence specific to a Los Angeles context to inform healing and reconciliation. The Committee also shall investigate, study, and offer strategies and solutions relative to advancing the intent of this motion and implementing collaborative governance models, participatory budgeting, governmental transparency and accessibility, and other strategies and solutions that overcome systemic oppression in the City of Los Angeles. Within 30 days after the end of the Committee's term, the Department shall prepare a staff report with recommendations for Council action. The Committee shall include representatives from the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, Los Angeles City Council Districts, Local and State Elected Official Offices, Los Angeles Unified School District, Chief Equity Officers from each City Department, academics from local universities, community-based and grassroots organizations, and local community leaders.

Presented By:



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District



MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District



HEATHER HUTT
Councilmember, 11th District



MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilmember, 7th District

Seconded By:



ORIGINAL