January 31, 2020

SANTA ANA CITY COUNCIL
20 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA
P.O. BOX 1988, M31
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

Dear Honorable Mayor and the City Council of the City of Santa Ana,

The Political Action Committee of the Santa Ana Police Officers Association writes to request that you demand that Councilmembers Cecilia Iglesias and Juan Villegas remove themselves from the Public Safety Committee, and if they refuse to do so, that action is taken to remove them from that Council committee. By their conduct they have shown they do not support our public safety members and that they cannot work with those stakeholders in the City that support and represent public safety.

During the past year Councilmembers Iglesias and Villegas have demonstrated by their statements and actions that they are not fit to oversee this vital function of City government.

During the budget approval process, they directed City staff, in an unprecedented fashion, to segregate the entire police budget to enable them to vote “NO” on that part of the budget that supports the operation and existence of public safety.

On multiple occasions, when speaking from the dais, they have suggested that the Association was the source of “dark money” and special interests working illicitly to influence City policies and processes. Casting unproven aspersions on the recognized employee organization representing the City’s police services damages the collective bargaining process in violation of state law.

They have interfered with the Civil Service hiring process, needlessly exposing the City to liability. They have interfered with the City Clerk in two matters that have cost the City $40,000.00 in litigation. Councilmember Iglesias filed a lawsuit against the City that has cost the City thousands of dollars. This is conduct that wrongfully diverts City resources and negatively impacts the public safety of Santa Ana.

Councilmember Villegas is using the Public Safety Committee to mislead our community about a Family Justice Center at the Santa Ana Police Department. A Family Justice Center is a place to secure various social services such as court support, legal assistance, prosecution and advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and elder abuse. Of additional concern, information has surfaced that Councilmember Villegas has demanded the City hire his long-time female friend to oversee and run this internal city operation. Ironically, he voted “NO” on the City and police department budget. There is no funding to hire his female friend so the City is now paying this person as a “consultant”. Why was there not a testing process, transparency or best practices followed versus back door illicit deals.
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HONORABLE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF SANTA ANA

A Family Justice Center is not office space at the Police Department, which is what the Councilmember is trying to pass off on an unsuspecting public. This phony Family Justice Center is a political ploy. A Family Justice Center by definition is a safe, confidential and friendly place where assistance is provided to survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and elder/dependent adult abuse; a place away from the police department — not the police department. The police department is just that, a police department and detention facility. At the December 10, 2019, Public Safety Committee meeting during the discussion of the Family Justice Center both Councilmembers Iglesias and Penaloza stated opposition and commented on the fact that no family justice center in existence is currently housed at a police facility and recommended best practices of it being off site. How is it that two of three councilmembers of this committee voice serious concern and opposition yet this political fallacy moves forward?

This claim is deceptive and demeans the good work of other non-profit foundations working to fund this type of needed community resource, as well as doing a disservice to the families and victims in need of these services. It is nothing more than a political ploy and is a further indication that the Councilmember is misusing his position on the Public Safety Committee.

On December 19th, in a city press release reference the SAPD hiring 50 police officers Mr. Villegas said, "with the addition of these officers we took a major step forward fulfilling our primary obligation, which is a safe community for the residents of Santa Ana.” This is not only insulting to our officers but a slap in the face. More importantly, this is absolutely political, misleading and lying to residents and families of Santa Ana. Mr. Villegas was an absolute "no" in the approval of the public safety budget. For Mr. Villegas to pass himself off has the public safety supporter and take credit for the police department’s successes is not only unconceivable but unconscionable. 

On December 30, 2019, again Mr. Villegas is quoted in the Orange County Register with Ms. Iglesias saying, "I wholeheartedly support the men and women of the Santa Ana Police Department, not their union." Well, Mr. Villegas, who is a union member himself with the Orange County Employees Association, knows that all our police officers are members of our police officer's association. By saying he does not support our union, the recognized labor group composed of all our officers then he is saying he doesn’t support our police officers. This is contradictory, especially as a union member himself and a special security officer for the county.

How can these Councilmembers sit on this committee when they show no respect for the principles or the parties involved in these vital issues, where they have shown disdain for the stakeholders including the Association and the citizens, and where they have acted for their personal interests rather than those of the City?

We ask that you respond to this request by placing this matter on the Council agenda for consideration by the Council as a whole. Not addressing this issue can only be seen as condoning their behavior. We seek positive, ethical and professional conduct from our elected officials. Removing these Councilmembers from the Public Safety Committee is a step toward that goal.

Sincerely,

SANTA ANA POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE - I.D. 841683

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SAPOA - PAC Committee ID 841683 Letter to Santa Ana City Council - January 31, 2020