

Communication from Public

Name: Don Starnes

Date Submitted: 04/29/2025 11:24 AM

Council File No: 16-1104-S3

Comments for Public Posting: I am against the motion: City Council Rules / Council Rule 7 / Council Rule 63 / N-Word and C-Word Epithets / Amendments
Censorship doesn't solve the problem of course speech: better speech does. Any unkind or course language should be acknowledged by the board (by whoever is addressing the public speaker). A better policy would be that such acknowledgement be required by the board. So: a conversation would go like this:
public speaker: [some statement including language considered by the board member to be course] board member: "I understand that you feel angry. However, your language is disrespectful and undermines your case." - This motion specifies two words; there are many other words that cause the same problems. - Some advocates of the motion are concerned about offending and discouraging young people (such as students). Students are better served observing adults successfully dealing with people who use course language. - The City Council cannot reparent people. People use poor language because they have been taught to do so. Better to help teach people the detriments of course language. - People should be free to undermine their own case by speaking poorly.

Communication from Public

Name: Eric Preven

Date Submitted: 04/29/2025 12:19 PM

Council File No: 16-1104-S3

Comments for Public Posting: When the Los Angeles City Council is up to no good — which is often — people send me clips. “Eric, do something.” I used to show up in person, but the council eliminated virtual public comment, effectively banning anyone without free mornings and a downtown parking strategy. I still write — mostly on CityWatch. It’s not the New York Times, but it gets more eyeballs than most council meetings ever will. The latest clip didn’t land in my inbox — it turned up in a city case file. Submitted by the City Attorney’s office. A greatest-hits reel of so-called “disruptive” speakers, paired with a letter from Zuma Dogg warning the city that banning profanities like the N-word or the C-word wouldn’t survive a legal challenge. Let me be clear: I don’t use those words. I’ve never joined the expletive wars. My criticisms are pointed, yes — but rooted in civic purpose. I don’t shout obscenities. I call out what’s obscene. And what’s obscene is this: The City Council is, once again, trying to silence dissent under the banner of “decorum.” Back in 2018, then-Council President Herb Wesson — with assists from convicted felons José Huizar and Mitch Englander — rewrote Council Rules 7 and 63 to create an escalating ban system for “disruptive” speakers. One disruption? Out for the day. Two? Out for three more. Three? Six-meeting blackout. No clear definition of disruption. No hearing. No appeal. Just the gavel. Attorney Dan Wright warned them it wouldn’t hold up. He cited *Walsh v. Bryant Enge*, a federal case out of Portland, where the Ninth Circuit ruled cities can remove someone for actual disruption — not because they might say something inconvenient. “Actual disruption means actual disruption.” But LA pushed ahead. Because this wasn’t about safety. It was about control. Meanwhile, they were moving public hearings into committee rooms with no cameras. I remember 30 separate property lien items getting fast-tracked in Budget and Finance — all off-air, away from public view. When I objected, Paul Krekorian said I had no business speaking. “You’re not a lawyer or a lobbyist,” he said. “You take no money.” Exactly, Paul. That’s why I speak. Now, in 2025, under Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson, the same old plan is back. Officials are reposting those disruptive-commenter clips and teasing new “civility” rules. They say it’s about restoring order. But let’s be honest — they just want the noise to go away. Rule 19 already

governs public comment. It requires that speakers be allowed to weigh in before the council votes on any item. It guarantees at least one minute of general public comment. That's it. But even that has become too much for some councilmembers. Instead of protecting that right, they've weaponized process. Rule 12 lets them bypass committee hearings altogether — pulling items straight to the council floor and avoiding public input. They use it when transparency gets inconvenient. And it's legal, because they wrote it that way. The message is clear: Speak if you must — but only when we say, how we say, and about what we say. And if your tone is wrong? Out you go. Look, not every speaker is eloquent. Some are offensive. But democracy is offensive sometimes. It's uncomfortable by design. If our elected officials can't handle one minute of unfiltered public input, maybe it's not the public that needs to be removed. The real obscenity at LA City Hall isn't the C-word or N-word shouted by an angry constituent. It's the billions in contracts moved without oversight. It's the cozy developer deals. It's the public hearings with the council hiding behind closed doors. It's a system that labels critics as nuisances and insiders as stakeholders. They call it decorum. I call it cowardice. I may no longer be in the room, but I'm not silent. I'm still writing. Still watching. And I'll keep pointing out every Rule 12 shortcut, every suppression tactic, every time they pretend sixty seconds of truth is a threat to democracy. Because Rule 19 says the public gets a minute. But the people of Los Angeles deserve much more. Eric Preven is a writer, producer, SoCal Journalism Award winner, who took on the Los Angeles City Council and won a pivotal battle for public transparency and the right to speak in the 2nd District Court of Appeal.

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Editorial

Pope Francis, 1936-1945, on his final journey

The death Monday in Rome of Pope Francis, age 88, brought to end one of the most controversial pontificates in recent history. Despite recently being released from a lengthy hospital stay, on Easter Sunday he met with Vice President JD Vance, who became a Catholic in 2019. "I know you have not been feeling great, but it's good to see you in better health," Vance told him.

According to the Vatican, they discussed Francis' opposition to President Donald Trump's immigration policies. In February, Vance defended the actions as consonant with Catholic doctrine. Francis then sent a letter to American bishops criticizing the mass deportations.

"The act of deporting people who in many cases have left their own land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution or serious deterioration of the environment, damages the dignity of many men and women, and of entire families, and places them in a state of particular vulnerability and defenselessness," he wrote in the letter.

On Easter, Francis was strong enough to bless those gathering in St. Peter's Square and sat as an aide read his Easter Message, which continued his criticism of U.S. and other countries' policies restricting immigration. He said, "How much contempt is stirred up at times towards the vulnerable, the marginalized and migrants!"

Although Francis' political stances made headlines, as the leader of a church with 1.4 billion members, a pope's duties largely are spiritual. He stressed mercy and compassion, saying the church ought to be a "field hospital" for wounded souls. The first pope from the Western Hemisphere, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he took public transportation. He emphasized humility and urged his clergy to go among the people and be "shepherds with

the smell of the sheep."

Quoting Jesus' Beatitudes, he said we ought to care "for the least of these." And he advanced ecumenism with Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christians, as well as with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and those of other faiths.

Bishop Kevin Vann of Orange County said Francis inspired the church to be "one that goes out, serving the poor, welcoming the lost and walking alongside all who seek Christ." Archbishop José H. Gomez remembered, "It was just in January that he offered prayers and words of consolation as we faced the destruction caused by the wildfires in the Palisades and Altadena."

More controversial was his attitude toward some church doctrines. Wrote Anthony Faiola for the Washington Post, "He was more broadly embraced by liberals, even if they felt his personal ecumenism never translated into the radical reform they sought, especially on the role of women." He also discouraged saying Mass in the 1962 Latin rite instead of the more common vernacular.

For his own funeral, Francis reduced the ceremonial pageantry used for his predecessors. Within 15 to 20 days from now, the 135 members of the College of Cardinals under 80 will meet in a secret "conclave" to choose his successor. It's sort of like the American Electoral College. For the past century, the process has taken three days or less.

Another non-European pope is a strong possibility, as 53 cardinal-electors are from Europe, but 23 from Asia, 20 from North America, 18 from Africa, where the church is growing fastest, 17 from South America and four from Oceania. Even non-Catholics will be watching closely to see who will be heading the church, and in what direction he will take it.

For now, though, may he rest in peace.

The real obscenity going on at Los Angeles City Hall

By Eric Preven

When the Los Angeles City Council is up to no good — which is often — people send me clips. "Eric, do something!" I used to show up in person, but the council eliminated virtual public comment, effectively banning anyone without free mornings and a downtown parking strategy.

I still write — mostly on City-Watch. It's not the New York Times, but it gets more eyeballs than most council meetings ever will.

The latest clip didn't land in my inbox — it turned up in a city case file. Submitted by the City Attorney's office. A greatest-hits reel of so-called "disruptive" speakers, paired with a letter from Zuma Dagg warning the city that banning profanities like the N-word or the C-word wouldn't survive a legal challenge.

Let me be clear: I don't use those words. I've never joined the expletive wars. My criticisms are pointed, yes — but rooted in civic purpose. I don't shout obscenities. I call out what's obscene.

And what's obscene is this: The City Council is, once again, trying to silence dissent under the banner of "decorum."

Back in 2018, then-Council President Herb Wesson — with assists from convicted felons José Huizar and Mitch Englander — rewrote Council Rules 7 and 63 to create an escalating ban system for "disruptive" speakers. One disruption? Out for the day. Two? Out for three more. Three? Six-meeting blackout. No clear definition of disruption. No hearing. No appeal. Just the gavel.

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But L.A. pushed ahead. Because this wasn't about safety. It was about control.

Meanwhile, they were moving public hearings into committee rooms with no cameras. I remember 30 separate property lien items getting fast-tracked in Budget and Finance — all off-air, away from public view. When I objected, Paul Krekorian said I



Council members listen to public comment at Los Angeles City Hall in late October. DEAN MUSGROVE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

had no business speaking. "You're not a lawyer or a lobbyist," he said. "You take no money."

Exactly, Paul. That's why I speak.

Now, in 2025, under Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson, the same old plan is back. Officials are reposting those disruptive-commenter clips and teasing new "civility" rules. They say it's about restoring order. But let's be honest — they just want the noise to go away.

Rule 19 already governs public comment. It requires that speakers be allowed to weigh in before the council votes on any item. It guarantees at least one minute of general public comment. That's it. But even that has become too much for some council members.

Instead of protecting that right, they've weaponized process. Rule 12 lets them bypass committee hearings altogether — pulling items straight to the council floor and avoiding public input. They use it when transparency gets inconvenient. And it's legal, because they wrote it that way.

The message is clear: Speak if you must — but only when we say, how we say, and about what we say. And if your tone is wrong? Out you go.

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democracy is offensive sometimes. It's uncomfortable by design. If our elected officials can't handle one minute of unfiltered public input, maybe it's not the public that needs to be removed.

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It's the billions in contracts moved without oversight. It's the cozy developer deals. It's the public hearings with the council hiding behind closed doors. It's a system that labels critics as nuisances and insiders as stakeholders.

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I call it cowardice. "I may no longer be in the room, but I'm not silent. I'm still writing. Still watching. And I'll keep pointing out every Rule 12 shortcut, every suppression tactic, every time they pretend 60 seconds of truth is a threat to democracy."

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Eric Preven is a writer, producer, SoCal Journalism Award winner, who took on the Los Angeles City Council and won a pivotal battle for public transparency and the right to speak in the 2nd District Court of Appeal.

Letters

Readers respond to Question of nos in which he filed Chapter 11

field on trades, so America can sel