

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: United Neighborhoods for Los Angeles (UN4LA) would like to submit the attached letter regarding the rejection of the nomination of Jamie York to the Ethics Commission.



United Neighborhoods for Los Angeles

www.un4la.com

UN4LA Board

Casey Maddren, President

Richard Platkin, Vice-President

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August 30, 2023

Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Rejection of York Nomination for Ethics Commission

Members of the Los Angeles City Council:

United Neighborhoods for Los Angeles (UN4LA) is a community group formed to foster better planning and better government within the County of Los Angeles, and all cities and unincorporated areas contained within the County's borders. While UN4LA works to address a range of issues, our primary concern is ethical conduct in government. This is the issue that has prompted us to write this letter.

We are very concerned and dismayed by the LA City Council's unanimous rejection of Jamie York's nomination to the LA City Ethics Commission. We are stunned that the City Council, a body that has been the subject of numerous scandals in recent years, would resort to such a naked assault on necessary oversight. Four members of the LA City Council have been charged with committing criminal acts in the last three years. In 2022, a recording surfaced that caught three councilmembers making a variety of reprehensible comments in a discussion about how to manipulate the redistricting process.

And in spite of all that, on August 18, the LA City Council chose once again to demonstrate its total contempt for ethics in government. When Ms. York's nomination was the next item of business on that day's agenda, the motion was announced by the City Clerk's representative only as "Item 13," with no mention of the subject. As soon as the item was announced, Councilmember Harris-Dawson, without so much as acknowledging the nominee, immediately called on Councilmember Rodriguez, who, still without mentioning the subject, said, "I'd like to amend to 'move to disapprove,' please." Councilmember Harris-Dawson quickly responded with, "Excellent, I'll second that motion. Any discussion? Seeing none, we can open the roll." And with no explanation and no discussion, the 14 councilmembers who were present voted unanimously to reject Ms. York's nomination.

It's hard to see the Council's action as anything other than a coordinated ambush. How could anyone watching this spectacle come away with any other impression than that the members of the Council had arranged, behind closed doors, to torpedo Ms. York's nomination? And worse, not one member of the Council had the courage or the honesty to state their reasons for voting against Ms. York's nomination. Subsequent remarks by Councilmember Soto-Martinez seem to indicate that labor organizations were opposed to Ms. York's nomination, and that they played a role in persuading the entire City Council to vote against her.

Ms. York is a respected member of her community who has proven her abilities and her integrity as a member of the executive board of the Reseda Neighborhood Council. [She has supported a revised municipal lobbying ordinance](#), which among other things, would inject transparency into interactions between lobbyists and neighborhood councils. She is eminently qualified to serve on the Ethics Commission. Both she and the public deserve a transparent accounting of the reasons behind the City Council's vote. From the public's perspective, this appointment was a litmus test for ethics, accountability, and transparency in government. Why did you fail us all?

Sincerely,

Casey Maddren, President
United Neighborhoods for Los Angeles