

MOTION

The City of Los Angeles is home to the largest and most vibrant Armenian-American community in the country, whose contributions to the city's economic, cultural, and civic life are foundational to the identity of neighborhoods from Little Armenia to Valley Glen.

On January 27, 2026, Mehmet Oz, acting in his official capacity as Administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), released a video filmed in the Valley Glen neighborhood that baselessly targeted the Armenian-American community through harmful ethnic profiling. During said video, Administrator Oz stood directly in front of a family-owned Armenian bakery, specifically singling out the Armenian alphabet on the business's signage as a "dialect" indicative of what he termed the "Russian-Armenian Mafia" and a \$3.5 billion hospice fraud scheme.

These reckless and racially charged allegations were made without providing any evidence linking the specific small businesses shown to criminal activity, instead using cultural and linguistic markers as proxies for criminality. The impact of this collective indictment has been immediate and severe, with the targeted bakery reporting a devastating 30% drop in sales within days of the video's release, threatening the livelihood of hardworking Angelenos.

Such rhetoric by a high-ranking federal official not only incites discrimination and ethnic scapegoating but also ignores the intergenerational trauma of a community that has historically faced systemic persecution and genocide. The City of Los Angeles maintains a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech, racial profiling, and the weaponization of government platforms to disparage specific ethnic groups.

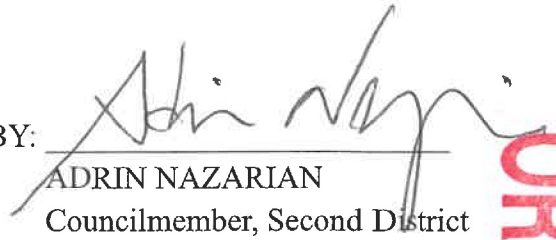
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights), with assistance from EWDD, to report within 60 days on the impacts of this incident, including but not limited to the following elements:

1. **Detailed Accounting:** detailing Mehmet Oz's specific, alleged defamatory or discriminatory statements, identifying the targeted groups (especially the Armenian community), and categorizing the nature of the claims.
2. **Civil Rights and Discrimination Analysis:** an analysis of the claims against established civil rights law, focusing on potential unlawful discrimination based on Armenian national origin, examining the resulting hostile environment, and assessing non-economic harms like emotional distress and reputational damage.
3. **Economic Impact Assessment:** quantifying and detailing the financial damage sustained by local Armenian-owned businesses due to the statements, including lost revenue, increased costs, and devaluation of assets.

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I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Attorney to report on the legal standing of the City of Los Angeles to join the Governor's civil rights complaint or to file a separate amicus brief, and to explore all available local and state legal remedies regarding the defamation of the City's commercial districts by a federal official.

PRESENTED BY:



ADRIN NAZARIAN
Councilmember, Second District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL