



Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney
Hydee Feldstein Soto

REPORT NO. R26-0467
AUG 11 2026

REPORT RE:

**LEGAL ACTIONS SURROUNDING CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND
MEDICAID SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR DR. MEHMET OZ'S STATEMENTS
IN VALLEY GLEN VIDEO**

The Honorable City Council
of the City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Council File No. 26-0155

Honorable Members:

The Office of the City Attorney submits this report in response to the City Council's requests in the above-referenced Council File related to allegations made by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz in a video released on January 27, 2026 (Motion Nazarian - Soto-Martinez).

On January 29, 2026, the Office of the Governor of California submitted a civil rights complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regarding Dr. Oz's "baseless and racially charged allegations targeting the Armenian American community in Los Angeles." The complaint, filed with OCR via email only, requests OCR to conduct an investigation and issue a corrective action to address potential violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A copy of the complaint is included with this report.

Because this particular "complaint" was not a pleading filed in court to commence a lawsuit but rather an administrative action, there is no legal mechanism for the City to join the State's civil rights complaint sent to OCR. To the best of our knowledge, OCR has not responded to this complaint from the Governor's Office and, given the time that has passed, OCR may not ever produce a public response. Nevertheless, we will continue to track the status and will update the City Council if anything changes.

With respect to direct litigation, it is generally accepted that a governmental entity cannot maintain a defamation action and this Office has found no case where a public entity was able to successfully sue for defamation. The State of California has not announced, and this Office is unaware of, any legal actions taken by the State, other than the Office of the Governor's civil rights complaint filed with HHS so there is no legal mechanism, at present, for the City to file an amicus brief in support of the State.

While there is no pending litigation from the State, this Office will be tracking any legal filings related to Dr. Oz's statements for purposes of possible amicus opportunities. Any such opportunities would need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for legal viability with respect to the City. For example, the Office is aware of one defamation lawsuit brought by a private individual against Dr. Oz based on the above-referenced video. This litigation matter is proceeding slowly through the court process and there is no motion currently pending before the trial court, so there is no opportunity to file an amicus brief in this case at this time.

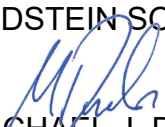
Should the City Council want to recess into closed session to discuss this matter, such action would be pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4) (one potential case). Government Code Section 54956.9(g) requires you to state publicly, prior to closed session, what subdivision of the section authorizes the closed meeting, and that the closed session is being held to confer, discuss with, or receive advice from, legal counsel regarding potential litigation.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Assistant City Attorney Nicole Gougis at (213) 978-8100. A member of this Office will be available when you consider this matter to answer questions you may have.

Sincerely,

HYDEE FELDSTEIN SOTO, City Attorney

By


MICHAEL J. DUNDAS
Chief Assistant City Attorney

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