



October 25, 2022

Councilmember Kevin de León  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Call for Resignation**

Councilmember de León:

In a recent television interview on ABC7, you stated, “If it is [my constituents’] decision that I move forward and step down then I’ll accept that.”<sup>1</sup> Your constituents are clearly, unambiguously calling for you to resign. The time has come for you to stand by your word, accept this call, and resign.

As you now seek community input to inform your decision whether to step down, The Eagle Rock Association (TERA) - with the broader Eagle Rock community - unequivocally urges you to resign.

Your statements, actions, and participation in a meeting that set out to disenfranchise Black residents and renters are unacceptable. To date, you have sought to obfuscate your own words during this meeting, while avoiding direct apology to those your words and actions have harmed.<sup>2</sup> You 1) belittled Black residents;<sup>3</sup> 2) sought to minimize the voice of renters in City government;<sup>4</sup> 3) erased Eagle Rock’s Black, Latino, and Asian communities by wrongly declaring Eagle Rock to be wholly white;<sup>5</sup> 4) expressed distrust and animosity towards white people;<sup>6</sup> 5) dehumanized a Black child;<sup>7</sup> 6) denigrated younger Latino leaders;<sup>8</sup> 7) used sexist terms when referring to a woman colleague;<sup>9</sup> 8) deployed homophobic tropes in reference to a gay colleague;<sup>10</sup> 9) defended an accused sexual harasser;<sup>11</sup> and 10) did not call out or stop anti-Black comments or bigoted comments against Oaxacans, Jewish people, and Armenian Americans.<sup>12</sup> Your active participation in a hate-filled meeting to implement racial gerrymandering has placed our City in crisis. You cannot lead while holding unfettered animosity for—and unwillingness to work with—your own constituents.

Over the past two years, TERA has been confused about why our multi-ethnic organization could not get face time or an introductory meeting with you. We see now from the way you talk in back rooms that this was not a mere scheduling oversight: you have never had any interest in working collaboratively with an organization with a Black president and gay Latino vice-president, diverse board and membership, or with “white” Eagle Rock.

Your actions and statements require full acknowledgement, contrition, apology, and reparations. Rather than accountability, you have attempted to foist blame on your political ally Nury Martinez<sup>13</sup>, used a media tour to distract from your wrongdoing, and have taken refuge in the politics of racial division.<sup>14</sup>

Your ongoing actions have destroyed constituents' faith in you and shown there is no future for your continued governance of Council District 14. The only path forward is for you to leave office.

While you have resisted calls to resign, the City Council has stripped you of all committee positions. You have stated you intend to abdicate your own City Council duties, as any attempt by you to participate in City Council meetings would force meetings to a halt. Your own office has had to remove your name from community events, such as NELA Movie Night. Planned meetings for TERA's Rock The Boulevard project have had to be postponed indefinitely, because your office's participation in meetings would be disruptive.

The longer you remain in office, the more harm you cause across the region, and the longer you withhold representation and needed services from District 14 constituents. To be clear, Los Angeles is not coming to a standstill because you are so important personally. There are countless just, tolerant, and able Angelenos who could hold your office and successfully serve the people of District 14 and Los Angeles. Rather, the City Council's work is coming to a halt because the people of Los Angeles refuse to move on until all the politicians caught on tape in the process of racist and corrupt redistricting efforts take necessary steps to redress their unacceptable actions. This letter is part of that refusal and the corresponding demand for justice.

Even before the current crisis of leadership, Los Angeles faced enormous challenges. An affordable housing crisis, widespread homelessness, wage stagnation, violence towards vulnerable communities, heavy pollution, dangerous fire seasons, deadly streets, drought, and climate change remain issues that have not received the necessary action that Los Angeles residents deserve. The only way to move forward on these critical issues is through determined collaboration and mutual support, not through using racial division to preserve personal political power.

Resignation is the only option. You need to let your constituents begin to heal and recover from your actions. TERA urges you to resign immediately for the betterment of District 14 and our City.

Sincerely,



Greg Merideth  
President

## Notes

1. ABC7 interview, 10/21/2022.
2. CBS2/KCAL9 interview, 10/19/2022. "The words that were incendiary, words that were painfully hurtful. And I didn't do that." ABC7 interview, 10/21/2022. "Something that's not captured on audio is my facial gestures."
3. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. Kevin de León described Black communities in Los Angeles speaking up as being "the Wizard of Oz effect," stating, "when you actually pull the curtain is that you see the little wizard." Moments later, responding to a comment from his political ally Gil Cedillo that "25 Blacks are shouting," Councilmember de León responded, "But they shout like they're 250 when there's a hundred of us."
4. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. In a discussion about a district that might advance representation of renters, Councilmember de León responded, "So you're saying that's the one to put in a blender to chop up left and right."
5. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. Responding to a comment from Councilmember Gil Cedillo that "Elysian Valley's a headache. Eagle Rock's a headache, Highland Park's a headache, & Lincoln Heights. I don't need those areas," Councilmember de León stated, "Elysian, Eagle Rock, Highland Park are white."
6. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. Councilmember de León described a distrust of white people: "The white folks will cut you in a heartbeat." "We as Latinos are not supposed to fill [elected] positions and it has to do with the white liberal world."
7. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. In a discussion about Councilmember Mike Bonin bringing his then two-year-old Black son to the 2017 Kingdom Day parade, Councilmember de León interjected, "Just like when Nury brings her Goyard bag or the Louis Vuitton bag."
8. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. Speaking of Measure J co-lead and then-City Council candidate Eunisses Hernandez, Councilmember de León said, "She's running on her own. I didn't know who she was."
9. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. See note #5 above.
10. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. See note #5 above.
11. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021. Speaking of the calls for removal of accused sexual harasser Tony Mendoza, Councilmember de León said, "There's not really a legal issue here. You know, there's no criminality issue, there's just a harassment issue."
12. Leaked audio of Los Angeles County Federation redistricting conversation, 10/18/2021.
13. CBS2/KCAL9 interview, 10/19/2022. "I was shocked at the words that came out of Nury Martinez's mouth."
14. Noticiero Univision interview, 10/19/2022 (translated). In Councilmember de León's first interview after the widespread calls for resignation, he cast a limited apology that was directed to "my community" rather than an apology specifically to those groups that he had hurt: "I'm so sorry. I am extremely sorry, and that is why I apologize to all my people, to my entire community, for the damage caused by the painful words that were carried out that day last year."