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Campillo's reforms a smart response to Gloria's trash fee machinations



San Diego Councilmember Raul Campillo is shown at a June meeting of the City Council. (U-T)



By **U T EDITORIAL BOARD**

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In a city where every elected official is a Democrat, it's rare to see one offer a pointed critique of San Diego's governance. But that's just what Councilmember Raul Campillo has done with [a call for reforms](#) in response to the appalling tactics Mayor Todd Gloria and other [leaders](#) used to clear the way for requiring more than 200,000 single-family homes to begin paying directly for trash collection.

In 2022, [50.5%](#) of voters backed allowing the city to charge households exempted from trash fees by a 1919 city law after being told it would lead to monthly bills of \$23 to \$29. But in February, city officials announced the basic fee would be \$53. Public outrage led that to be reduced to [\\$43.60](#) — still 90% higher than the low-end estimate and 50% higher than the high-end estimate. Nevertheless, Gloria [rejects](#) the widely held view that this was a “bait and switch.”

Campillo — who voted against the proposal because of this deception — wants a requirement that the city must undertake a thorough analysis of what fees would be and provide it to voters before they decide on proposals like 2022's Measure B, not after.

The Harvard-trained attorney also wants to avoid a replay of the city's shabby compliance with [Proposition 218](#). The 1996 state ballot measure includes a provision that blocks proposed fees from being collected if they are objected to by a majority of affected property owners. The law requires local governments to notify affected residents via mail and tell them how they can contest such fees. City officials did the minimum possible, sending out a notice that many found vague and confusing. Campillo proposes requiring that the first page of such mailers “must clearly state that a fee is being proposed” and that the mailers include a simple form with which residents can object.

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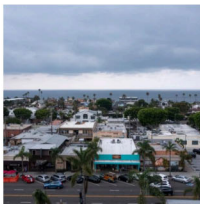
These two reforms should be the first step toward a culture change at City Hall. But will they actually be enacted, given that doing so would amount to an admission of wrongdoing? Gloria and a majority of the council have never apologized for the city's dishonest tactics on this issue. There's no reason to expect them to do the right thing now.

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