

Del Cerro for Black Lives Matter

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Dear Neighbors,

This letter serves as a response to your message “DC4BLM Response to Proposed FY22 Budget” which my office received via email on May 24, 2021. Thank you for taking the time to write to me about this critically important topic. We are in full agreement that a budget is a statement of morals and San Diegans deserve a budget that puts people first by centering equality and justice at its core. In ways big and small, this year’s budget does exactly that, far more than any City budget ever has. At the end of your letter, you ask, “*what has changed?*” By the end of this letter, I hope you will see that much has changed and much is changing for the better in the City of San Diego.

As a Councilmember, I am encouraged to express my priorities to the Mayor and the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst, though the reality of a “Strong Mayor” form a government dictates that while my priorities are always taken into account and given genuine consideration, it is not in all cases that they are put into action. The lack of full adaptation of every aspect of my priority memo in the Mayor’s budget drafts and in the City’s final budget indicates neither a change in my priorities, nor my willingness to advocate for them. I have rolled up my sleeves and done significant work to make San Diego a City that is safe and just for all its residents, regardless of their race or ZIP code. This is a long-term process that will occur over

years, not weeks, as I, and a majority of my Council colleagues as well as the Mayor have stated during the budget process several times.

Now, I would like to address your suggestion that I have not advocated strongly enough for additional de-escalation and racial bias training for SDPD personnel, and the following italicized excerpt from your letter:

“We believed you when you spoke to our group and during your campaign when you advocated for non-law enforcement solutions to homelessness and drug addiction crises, and for redirecting funding and resources so that the police and even firefighters, who are often ill-equipped to deal with these issues, will not have to respond to every call. You stated that incarceration should be the last option.”

I strongly believe that incarceration should be the last option for remedying a transgression against society, and that addiction is a disease, not a crime, and ought to be treated as such. The death of my brother to an opioid addiction is something that I think about every day, and I know that people like him deserve our support, not our judgment. This is why I have met with the leaders of numerous organizations and done what I could to support them during my first few months in office, from Kitchens for Good, which trains individuals who have suffered from addiction, homelessness, and former incarceration to be chefs and business owners around San Diego County, to PATH, which helps unsheltered individuals with numerous issues including drug addiction. When interviewed on radio and television, I have specifically and repeatedly called attention to how social services, not criminal justice, are needed to help people with these challenges—because public officials need to explain how services work and how a person-centered approach is the real solution to the issues our constituents call on us to solve. I’ve explained live on-air that our unsheltered population have reason to not trust the City when

offered help or approached by police, and thus funding and resources to service providers is a key element of this year's budget. All of the things I have written, spoken, and advocated for regarding the budget would prevent eight officers from showing up to address one unsheltered individual and, more to the point, would help prevent the individual from becoming homeless in the first place. The point of reference from which I speak with passion about these things is my own personal experience and knowing that the people I am helping *are* my brother. It is from this point of view that I believe we are, as you state, "achiev[ing] change and start[ing to] implement policy that cultivates equity and social justice within our city."

I am also in full agreement with your statement that we cannot achieve equity in our City when certain San Diegans do not have any options to live with dignity, which is why I am a fierce advocate for a housing-first approach to our housing and homelessness crises that prioritizes getting our homeless neighbors into permanent supportive housing with wrap-around services as quickly and humanely as possible. I have worked with and advocated for groups like PATH and will be voting to increase the City's relationship with them through substantial additional investment in their services.

To the issue of police training, these are, and have consistently been, among my top priorities for the FY2022 budget as it relates to Public Safety. Page 11 of my original Budget Priorities Memo states that the City should:

- Establish additional training programs regarding true conscious bias and de-escalation techniques.

- Diversify and strengthen City alternatives to Police, such as community investments, non-law enforcement first responders, and decriminalization of low-level offenses.

Also in my Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods (“PS&LN”) Committee priorities memo, I wrote:

- “At the core of the message the City hears from community groups pushing for reform is that individuals want fewer unnecessary contacts from police officers, particularly in ways that reflect outdated thinking about criminal justice. Homelessness, drug addiction, mental health episodes, and interactions with youth require proper training and precise monitoring so that the appropriate response and solution are applied every time...”
- “...The City must provide the resources for SDPD to meet the state mandated statutory training goals. Research has shown that meaningful procedural justice training does lead to a reduction in the use of force and complaints against officers. SDPD officers must receive effective conscious bias and de-escalation training that promotes discourse and equitable policing for all San Diegans. PS&LN should receive frequent updates on a viable strategy to stop harmful policing practices while simultaneously building legitimate connections with the community.”

Your letter directly mentions the apparent \$2.59 million reduction to SDPD training. Just as you did, I immediately noticed this apparent reduction in the first draft of the Mayor’s FY22 budget, and, staying true to my campaign statements, I didn’t ignore it. I brought my concerns

forward about the removal of this funding through the annual budget review process during SDPD's presentation on May 7, 2021. I specifically noted my concerns in my very first question for the Chief of Police, when I stated on the record:

“I see there's a proposed reduction of \$2.59 million from the training employee development expenditure. I'm concerned partly from my own experience and partly because of how many council colleagues noted in their budget priority memos the increased need for training in police officers. How does this reduction address the needs for officer training, de-escalation, and other aspects of having a trained workforce?”

The response from the Police Department spokesperson was that the reduction reflects a shift in staffing: in this case, the shift is from officers who were in training at the academy in 2020 and now are working Patrol Officers in the field in 2021. To be clear, this reduction does not affect programmatic training within the department. I was still not satisfied with the explanation, so I pressed further in my questioning on this issue:

“Do we not expect to go out and recruit new cadets who need to be trained and therefore makes the \$2.59 million necessary [for training]?”

It was then explained that the money for training recruits is shifted to the training budget from the personnel budget when there is officer attrition (through retirement or moving to other departments, roughly 12 officers per month), and thus, this money for training is not reduced. There is in fact no reduction of \$2.59 million in training, and because I truly believe that officer training is a critical component of fair policing, I didn't allow the issue to go unnoticed and unaddressed when it was my turn to question the Chief and his staff.

I have also been a staunch advocate that the new Commission on Police Practices needs *more* funding than what has been proposed in the FY2022 budget, for more resources to facilitate the Commission's work and for a permanent in-house attorney that can focus full-time on the Commission's tasks, and have been consistent in my advocacy for this since the day I took office.

Lastly, I would like to address this italicized excerpt from your letter: "*What are you and the current City Council doing to act in solidarity with our community leaders and deliver justice to San Diegans of color?*"

I am proud of all that my Council colleagues, Mayor Gloria, and I are doing on behalf of the fight for equity and justice in our City and to advance the interests of People of Color. As a new Councilmember, at every turn, I have fought to uplift many communities, but particularly the community of Linda Vista, which has suffered from systemic injustice for years. Specifically, I have advocated for much-needed investments in the community, such as improvements to transportation infrastructure financed by the Climate Equity Fund, solar panels in low income communities that reduce electricity bills and improve energy resiliency, a new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider who has promised faster response times in communities of color, promoted the Housing Stability Assistance Program with fliers in five languages and with a press conference in Linda Vista, and put on a COVID-19 vaccine clinic where my team put out trilingual fliers in the community. We are also working with the non-profit organization FACT (Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation) and Bayside Community Center to create a pilot program with the goal of achieving transportation equity in Linda Vista, particularly for seniors. We have seen the lack of accessible transportation in this historically overlooked

community and taken action to bridge the gap between the people who live there and the critical resources like groceries, child care, health care, and more.

As it relates to the Climate Equity Fund, a significant proportion of that funding is going to Linda Vista for traffic calming and pedestrian safety, as well as for improved public safety and environmental measures like more streetlights. As it relates to solar energy, I am appreciative that Mayor Gloria has committed to working with me to address the community's concerns regarding the barriers those who live in communities of concern face when they seek to install and utilize solar panels. Our partnership in analyzing these concerns resulted in the implementation of my idea to establish a Solar Rebate Program for low-income residents as part of the City's new Gas and Electric Franchise Agreement, and I am working with Councilmember Elo-Rivera on how to maximize the potential and reach of that program through our respective Council committees.

I also stood beside local minority business owners and advocates in Linda Vista to announce my support for AB 915, which will set goals for State agencies to award contracts to BIPOC, women, disabled, and veteran-owned small businesses. Likewise, in the Budget & Government Efficiency Committee meeting on April 28, 2021, when we were presented with the City's Disparity Study, I expressed my support for our City to develop race- and gender-conscious contracting programs to boost the number of business our City works with that are BIPOC- and women-owned, in the face of long-standing legal precedent that makes such programs difficult to implement, so that we can hopefully test the legal boundaries that other government agencies have not had the courage to test.

Furthermore, I've emphasized implementing structural change through the Committee I chair: the Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations (ED&IR) Committee, where my colleagues and I are dug in following the workplan we laid out with an equity lens on all our proposals and actions, to usher in an equitable and just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that puts people first, with a focus on those in the hardest-hit and most historically marginalized communities. We have emphasized improving the existing economic environment for small businesses, arts and culture organizations, and cross-border businesses that are owned by and that serve a far higher proportion of BIPOC residents. Finally, I have put much time and effort into developing programs that will make childcare accessible and affordable to San Diego families, as well as advocating as the Vice Chair of SANDAG's Transportation Committee for the Five Big Moves, which will transform our region through unprecedented public investment in transit infrastructure that breaks down long-standing barriers to economic, social, and racial equity and saves us from the impending threats of climate change.

All in all, on the issues of the public's health and safety, the environment, economic opportunity, housing affordability and homelessness, transportation, and any issue facing children, I am a Councilmember, elected in District 7, who works every day to implement bold change with wide-reaching positive effects across numerous policy areas.

I am always happy to find time on my calendar to meet with DC4BLM to discuss any matter before the City. I encourage you to continue providing feedback, making suggestions, and asking questions. I have and will continue to listen, consider, and respond. I believe we share far more ideological alignment than disagreement, and I make to you the same promise I would make to any advocacy group: that I will work in good faith to find common ground with you and

then get to work at City Hall to, as you ask for in your letter, “deliver social justice in the year[s]
to come.”

Sincerely yours,

Raul A. Campillo