

# Censure the Guilty: the Old Guard

Speech to the Community and City Council, 9-24-19

HUFF (Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom) has watched the Old Guard's cavalcade of distraction for the last nine months—as the unhoused population has swelled on the streets. Censure, and censure is overdue, for those in the Council minority and the staff who have ignored the most basic shelter and health needs of those outside. Choosing instead to find failed, costly, and face-saving measures to harass and disperse homeless people who gather for safety and community. Censure, indeed, is the just response for the City Manager & his underlings, most notably, Susie O'Hara. They have lied to the community, disgraced us all before the courts, and betrayed the homeless population with endless broken promises.

But for Glover and Krohn? This censure is a maneuver to undo the last election—which seems to be the whole point. And to prevent a possible Progressive majority in 2020.

Focusing on this censure narrative means losing focus on last election's main issues. False narratives such as the Recall Narrative, the "\$18,000 Investigation" Narrative, the "Civility" Narrative and the "Homeless Menace" Narrative. These divert attention from real issues while renters are being forced out and homeless freezing outside.

The "Progressives" and their supporters have gone along with this toxic narrative diversion, by not demanding that Watkins restore items to the Council agenda and insisting on procedural and substantial changes. Glover's supporters have urged Glover to trim his sails, speak softly, and walk on eggshells. This is a losing strategy. It betrays both the voters who put them in office and those who are counting on their strength not their submissiveness.

Who truly deserve censure? Those who have subverted the Progressive majority that voters thought they were bringing to power in the election last year. This Myers/Mathews censure resolution seems part of a continuing strategy which includes: Privileged denunciations from the Mayor's chair. Rerouting public issues into closed session. Taking up endless time with phony & empty staff presentations. Take a quick look at the doorways, parks, and neighborhoods tonight. Adequate shelter? Don't be absurd.

If Censure is to mean anything, it must address those with real power—and that, of course, would be the City Manager, the City Attorney, and the staff heads. These powerful agenda-setters never face public scrutiny, media oversight, and voter accountability.

The real Myers-Mathews agenda and those allied with them seems to be to derail Progressive issues. These include Rent Control, Just Eviction Protection, City Council Access & Accountability, Living Wages Citywide, Restoring Public Spaces & Facilities for Public Use, Ending Developer & Business Plums, Protecting the Library, No on Boardwalk Preferential Treatment, & Removing Militarism & Discrimination from Our Laws and Police Practices

What will this Censure actually do? Will it end to the endless needlemania & drug war hysteria stinking up the room? Or the absurd cries of “urine and feces on the ground” while keeping bathrooms closed at night, or during the day. It’s great to see **City Manager Martin Bernal’s** 4-year closure of the bathrooms outside these chambers finally reversed. But the Loudon Nelson bathrooms remain closed to the elderly, the sick, the disabled, and the homeless, casting aside **Vice-Mayor Cummings** advice for civility last meeting.

Then there’s the phony Censure hullabaloo about “civility”. “Civility” has been the cry of **Mayor Watkins** and those who have controlled the Council’s agenda though without the popular mandate that might justify such control. Councilmembers excluded grow impatient or angry. The public grows outraged. They speak out or try to. And presto they are all “uncivil”.

So when the Mayor fails to make the Civic Auditorium available and keeps much of the audience outside or in a second building—in spite of repeated requests. Or when she locks them out of the building after muzzling speakers who’ve waited for hours to speak. The “don’t act like a fascist” style salutes and raised voices are labeled “uncivil” and become the basis for further repression. When signs are raised that block no one, the Mayor interrupts her own meeting to threaten the audience with eviction

Devices to thwart Progressive measures. The Mayor’s selective recognition of favored Councilmembers and her ignoring of those—like Glover-whom she prefers not to hear from. Excluding Progressive matters altogether from the agenda items while packing the it with talk-heavy staff-concocted items that take up the time and space in endless chatter. Calling on the City Attorney to provide Brown Act pretexts and to shift previously open items into closed sessions. Highlighting partisan city officials who support her reactionary position like the Police Chief and Assistant City Manager.

Institutionally, the City Manager, City Attorney, and Department Heads have run the Council agenda, the Council and the city. While the Council membership comes and goes, these unelected highly-paid officials remain in power—unchallenged, unmonitored, & for decades unaccountable. In practice, they set the agenda & represent a reactionary & entrenched bureaucracy. Censure? Indeed! Censure the right targets !

Finally, the Censure is meaningless except as a media stunt to smear political opponents. It involves no consequences. It’s clearly the result of a political campaign to discredit and divert. It’s an attempt to reverse the last election’s outcome. It has successfully dismantled, dislodged and diverted the Progressive agenda. Progressives need to ignore these diversions and get back to their agenda—even if they fear losing the votes. If not, they’ve already lost the war.\