



URGENT ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Government Code Section 54954.2(b)
Rules of Procedure Chapter III.C.5

THIS ITEM IS NOT YET AGENDIZED AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE AGENDA AS A LATE ITEM, SUBJECT TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETION ACCORDING TO BROWN ACT RULES

Meeting Date: October 3, 2023

Item Description: Condemning Antisemitism

This item is submitted pursuant to the provision checked below:

- Emergency Situation (54954.2(b)(1) - majority vote required)
Determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.
- Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)
There is a need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted.

Once the item is added to the agenda (Consent or Action) it must be passed by the standard required vote threshold (majority, two-thirds, or 7/9).

Facts supporting the addition of the item to the agenda under Section 54954.2(b) and Chapter III.C.5 of the Rules of Procedure:

In the face of the antisemitic Zoom Bombing that occurred during the September 26, 2023 Special Council Meeting, this item needs immediate action.



Susan Wengraf
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 3, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Wengraf (author), Mayor Arreguín (co-sponsor),
Councilmember Taplin (co-sponsor), Councilmember Bartlett (co-sponsor)

Subject: Resolution Re-Affirming City of Berkeley's Condemnation of Anti-Semitism and
Other Expressions of Hate Speech

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution Re-Affirming the City of Berkeley's Condemnation of Anti-Semitism
and all forms of Hate Speech

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND

Throughout California, offensive hate-speech has intensified across cyberspaces where governmental boards host virtual public comment, including city council, school boards, and other government public forums. The alarming increase in hate speech incidents is confirmed by data throughout the nation.

In California, small white supremacist and antisemitic groups have been working together to increase their efforts and outreach. Most recently several city and county governments, including San Francisco, Walnut Creek, Sacramento, San Diego, Sonoma County, El Cerrito and Berkeley have been targeted by white supremacists in a coordinated effort to disrupt public meetings with antisemitic and racist hate speech using the remote access option to speak at the meetings via Zoom.

The introduction of Zoom call-in access for meetings, while intended to enhance accessibility for the public, has unintentionally enabled so-called "extremist" groups to exploit governmental platforms for spreading hateful rhetoric against Jewish, Black, Asian and LGBTQ communities.

Berkeley has a long history of opposing hate and intolerance in our communities. As a city, we must recommit to the fight against antisemitism and hate against all groups and make clear that Berkeley has zero tolerance for any form of hate speech in any context, including public meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No identifiable impacts to environmental sustainability

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Wengraf

Council District 6

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Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RE-AFFIRMING THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S CONDEMNATION OF ANTISEMITISM AND ALL FORMS OF HATE SPEECH

WHEREAS, antisemitism and hate speech remains a serious and growing threat to our City; and

WHEREAS, offensive, hate filled rhetoric has increased with remote public comment, including at City Council, School Board and other government public forums; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of Zoom call-in access for meetings, while intended to enhance accessibility for the public, has unintentionally enabled so-called "extremist" groups to exploit governmental platforms for spreading hateful rhetoric against Jewish, Black, Asian and LGBTQ communities; and

WHEREAS, the number of hate crimes across the United States continues to increase with hate crimes against Jews, African Americans and Asian Americans especially increasing; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley is dedicated to preventing and opposing hate and intolerance in our community; and

WHEREAS, standing up to antisemitism and all forms of hate and discrimination makes us stronger as a community; and

WHEREAS, an attack on any part of our community based on race, religion, gender identity or ability is an attack that weakens our social fabric; and

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley is committed to upholding the principles of equality, human rights, and religious freedom, and recognizes the importance of combating all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism, to foster a more just and inclusive society.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley strongly condemns all forms of antisemitism, and all hate speech directed at individuals or communities based on their Jewish identity and reaffirms its unequivocal condemnation of prejudice in all its forms.