

Councilmember Sophie Hahn  
City of Berkeley, District 5

**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: April 11, 2023**

**Item Description:** Declaring Daniel Ellsberg Week

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.*

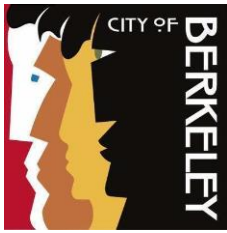
Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)

*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:**

Daniel Ellsberg, one of America's most iconic voices for truth, peace, and justice, recently shared a terminal diagnosis with the public, and is in hospice care. Our office received a request to honor Mr. Ellsberg during the Council Recess. Immediate action is required to honor Mr. Ellsberg while he is still able to appreciate the City of Berkeley's recognition and enjoy Daniel Ellsberg Week.



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CONSENT CALENDAR

April 11, 2023

**To:** Honorable Members of the City Council  
**From:** Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Author)  
**Subject:** Declaring Daniel Ellsberg Week

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution declaring April 24-30, 2023 as Daniel Ellsberg Week.

BACKGROUND

Daniel Ellsberg — the Pentagon Papers whistleblower who has been an inspiring activist for peace since the early 1970s — recently wrote a public letter disclosing that he has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, with a very short prognosis. His gracious, uplifting letter is reproduced in full, below.

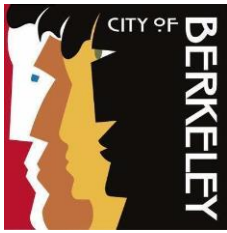
Daniel Ellsberg became a whistleblower in 1969 when he shared the Pentagon Papers with the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the New York Times, the Washington Post and 17 other newspapers. His subsequent trial on twelve felony counts, posing a possible sentence of 115 years, was dismissed in 1973 on grounds of governmental misconduct -- against him. The fallout from this misconduct led to the convictions of several White House aides and figured in impeachment proceedings against then-President Nixon. Since the end of the Vietnam War, Ellsberg has been a lecturer, scholar, writer, and activist, focused on the dangers of the nuclear era, wrongful U.S. military interventions, and the urgent need for principled whistleblowing.

Daniel Ellsberg has lived in Kensington for more than 40 years and has strong ties to Berkeley. Our community has been, and continues to be, enriched by his scholarship, principles, and presence. Daniel Ellsberg should be honored for his tremendous contributions on a local, national, and international scale, with a resolution from the City of Berkeley proclaiming April 24-30 to be Daniel Ellsberg Week.

AN OPEN LETTER FROM DANIEL ELLSBERG:

Dear friends and supporters,

I have difficult news to impart. On February 17, without much warning, I was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer on the basis of a CT scan and an MRI. (As is usual with pancreatic cancer--which has no early symptoms--it was found while looking for something else, relatively minor). I'm sorry to report to you that my doctors have given me only three to six months to live. Of course, they emphasize that everyone's case is individual; it might be more,



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or less.

I have chosen not to do chemotherapy (which offers no promise) and I have assurance of great hospice care when needed. Please know: right now, I am not in any physical pain, and in fact, after my hip replacement surgery in late 2021, I feel better physically than I have in years! Moreover, my cardiologist has given me license to abandon my salt-free diet of the last six years. This has improved my quality of life dramatically: the pleasure of eating my former favorite foods! And my energy level is high. Since my diagnosis, I've done several interviews and webinars on Ukraine, nuclear weapons, and first amendment issues, and I have two more scheduled this week.

As I just told my son Robert: he's long known (as my editor) that I work better under a deadline. It turns out that I live better under a deadline!

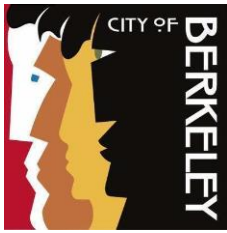
I feel lucky and grateful that I've had a wonderful life far beyond the proverbial three-score years and ten. (I'll be ninety-two on April 7th.) I feel the very same way about having a few months more to enjoy life with my wife and family, and in which to continue to pursue the urgent goal of working with others to avert nuclear war in Ukraine or Taiwan (or anywhere else).

When I copied the Pentagon Papers in 1969, I had every reason to think I would be spending the rest of my life behind bars. It was a fate I would gladly have accepted if it meant hastening the end of the Vietnam War, unlikely as that seemed (and was). Yet in the end, that action—in ways I could not have foreseen, due to Nixon's illegal responses—did have an impact on shortening the war. In addition, thanks to Nixon's crimes, I was spared the imprisonment I expected, and I was able to spend the last fifty years with Patricia and my family, and with you, my friends.

What's more, I was able to devote those years to doing everything I could think of to alert the world to the perils of nuclear war and wrongful interventions: lobbying, lecturing, writing and joining with others in acts of protest and non-violent resistance.

I wish I could report greater success for our efforts. As I write, "modernization" of nuclear weapons is ongoing in all nine states that possess them (the US most of all). Russia is making monstrous threats to initiate nuclear war to maintain its control over Crimea and the Donbas--like the dozens of equally illegitimate first-use threats that the US government has made in the past to maintain its military presence in South Korea, Taiwan, South Vietnam, and (with the complicity of every member state then in NATO ) West Berlin. The current risk of nuclear war, over Ukraine, is as great as the world has ever seen.

China and India are alone in declaring no-first-use policies. Leadership in the US, Russia, other nuclear weapons states, NATO and other US allies have yet to recognize that such threats of initiating nuclear war--let alone the plans, deployments and exercises meant to make them



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credible and more ready to be carried out--are and always have been immoral and insane: under any circumstances, for any reasons, by anyone or anywhere.

It is long past time--but not too late!--for the world's publics at last to challenge and resist the willed moral blindness of their past and current leaders. I will continue, as long as I'm able, to help these efforts. There's tons more to say about Ukraine and nuclear policy, of course, and you'll be hearing from me as long as I'm here.

As I look back on the last sixty years of my life, I think there is no greater cause to which I could have dedicated my efforts. For the last forty years we have known that nuclear war between the US and Russia would mean nuclear winter: more than a hundred million tons of smoke and soot from firestorms in cities set ablaze by either side, striking either first or second, would be lofted into the stratosphere where it would not rain out and would envelope the globe within days. That pall would block up to 70% of sunlight for years, destroying all harvests worldwide and causing death by starvation for most of the humans and other vertebrates on earth.

So far as I can find out, this scientific near-consensus has had virtually no effect on the Pentagon's nuclear war plans or US/NATO (or Russian) nuclear threats. (In a like case of disastrous willful denial by many officials, corporations and other Americans, scientists have known for over three decades that the catastrophic climate change now underway--mainly but not only from burning fossil fuels--is fully comparable to US-Russian nuclear war as another existential risk.)

I'm happy to know that millions of people--including all those friends and comrades to whom I address this message! --have the wisdom, the dedication and the moral courage to carry on with these causes, and to work unceasingly for the survival of our planet and its creatures.

I'm enormously grateful to have had the privilege of knowing and working with such people, past and present. That's among the most treasured aspects of my very privileged and very lucky life. I want to thank you all for the love and support you have given me in so many ways. Your dedication, courage, and determination to act have inspired and sustained my own efforts.

My wish for you is that at the end of your days you will feel as much joy and gratitude as I do now.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

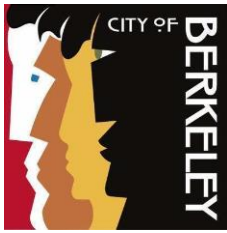
None.

#### CONTACT

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## Resolution Declaring Daniel Ellsberg Week

Whereas, Daniel Ellsberg risked life in prison to reveal secret, illegal, and immoral activities to the people of the United States and world by giving the Pentagon Papers to the U.S. Congress and news media; and

Whereas, Ellsberg's courageous actions contributed to ending the war in Vietnam, and to discouraging further war-making, including by informing the public of the inner workings of the U.S. government; and

Whereas, further revelations made by Ellsberg over many years have greatly informed the public of the dangers of nuclear weaponry; and

Whereas, Daniel Ellsberg for decades has been an outstanding educator and activist on some of the most important issues facing humanity; and

Whereas, Daniel Ellsberg has supported, encouraged, and inspired whistleblowers, journalists, and activists across the globe; and

Whereas, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has placed its Doomsday Clock measurement of the current risk of nuclear war higher than it has ever been before, and every means of awakening people to the danger is essential;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Jesse Arreguin, Mayor of the City of Berkeley, do hereby designate April 24-30, 2023, as Daniel Ellsberg Week, and encourage during this week the reading of Daniel Ellsberg's books, articles, and interviews, and viewing of his films and videos, some of which can be found at [defusenuclearwar.org/ellsberg](https://defusenuclearwar.org/ellsberg).