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June 28, 2019

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

I write on behalf of the Santa Ana Police Officers Association (SAPOA) and its president, Gerry Serrano, to complain about the conduct of Councilmember Cecilia Iglesias. A review of her Facebook page, on which she repeatedly identifies herself using her City of Santa Ana business card, shows that she has violated the City of Santa Ana Code of Ethics and Conduct as well as the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (California Government Code Section 3500 et seq) on a number of occasions, to the detriment of the Association and Sergeant Serrano. The specific conduct complained of is set forth below. Please conduct an investigation and take the appropriate action based on your findings.

The City of Santa Ana Code of Ethics and Conduct requires that a councilmember agrees to “treat my fellow officials, staff and the public with patience, courtesy and civility, even when we disagree on what is best for the community” and to “conduct myself in a courteous and respectful manner at all times during the performance of my official City duties.” Councilmember Iglesias has used language that is the opposite of civil and courteous such as calling Sergeant Serrano a bully and corrupt, and that implies improper action on his part to act for personal gain.

The Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA), specifically at Government Code Sections 3502, 3506, and 3506.5(a) and (d) gives public employees the right to form, join, and participate in the activities of employee organizations of their own choosing for the purpose of representation on all matters of employer-employee relations, and to do so without interference. The comments of Councilmember Iglesias attempt to interfere with the Santa Ana Police Officers Association by decrying the actions of the Association President and by suggesting that the political action of the Association is inappropriate, or improper.

Councilmember Iglesias has violated the Code of Ethics and Conduct and the MMBA thirteen (13) times since February, 2019.

On February 10, 2019, in reference to the duly adopted contract between the Police Officers Association and the City, she refers to “bully” tactics and alleges that Sergeant Serrano acted for his personal benefit. Her negative implication constitutes an interference with the Association.

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On February 15, 2019, she re-publishes the post of a Paul Gonzales in which he calls Sgt. Serrano a "corrupt cop."

On February 16, 2019, she accuses Sgt. Serrano of acting for personal gain by "padding his retirement benefit", implying that it is to the detriment of the Association.

On February 17, 2019, she again uses the "bully" characterization.

On February 21, 2019, she says that Sgt. Serrano wasted "his members [sic] dues." This statement is direct interference with the activities of the SAPOA.

On February 22, 2019, she accuses Sgt. Serrano of a crime: the misappropriation of members' dues. This is both a violation of the Code of Ethics, the MMBA and is defamatory.

On February 25, 2019, she directly interferes with the SAPOA when she comments, "this is not good representation."

On April 8, 2019, she, again, accuses Sgt. Serrano of acting for personal gain. Uncivil, discourteous and untrue.

On April 28, 2019, she calls Sgt. Serrano a bully and alleges that he acted for personal gain.

On April 30, 2019, she calls him corrupt, a bully and alleges that he acts only for personal gain.

On May 2, 2019, she calls him a bully; says that he is getting rich on the backs of the Santa Ana residents which implies improper behavior for personal gain; alleges that he is taking money and not providing police services; and calls him corrupt. This would be laughable if not for the fact that it is untrue, and known to be untrue, and is being propounded by an elected official speaking about a city employee who is acting as the duly elected president of a recognized employee organization. Instead it is misconduct under the Code of Ethics and Conduct, the MMBA and is defamatory.

On June 8, 2019, she calls Sgt. Serrano corrupt and directly interferes with the SAPOA by suggesting a change in leadership.

On an unknown date in June, 2019, after June 8, she again calls Sgt. Serrano corrupt and a bully.

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More than once during the time period recounted above, Councilmember Iglesias posted her City of Santa Ana business card. She held herself out to be a representative of the City. As City Council members you should have some concern about the manner in which a fellow councilmember treats a city employee, let alone one who has been elected by his peers a number of times to lead the employee organization. Her use of derogatory names, her allegation of acting for personal gain, her attempts to interfere with the Association regarding its representation of its members and its internal processes, all of which are unwarranted and illegal, are behaviors that reflect poorly on the City and the Council.

Please take this matter under consideration. We are available to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Charles Goldwasser

SAPOA - 2019 Letter to Mayor and Members of the City Council Regarding Iglesias Complaint

copy:  Gerry Serrano, President, Santa Ana Police Officers Association  
 Kristine Ridge, City Manager, City of Santa Ana  
 Sonia Carvalho, City Attorney, City of Santa Ana