

Public Statement: Farrah N. Khan, Former Mayor, City of Irvine

Good evening.

My name is Farrah Khan, and I had the honor of serving as your Mayor, a role I held with deep respect for this community and an unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility.

The City of Irvine had balanced budgets throughout my tenure and had received dozens of awards for its budget, including a survey that found it to be the most fiscally stable city in America. That didn't happen by accident. It happened because we made disciplined decisions, balanced our budgets, and always remembered one fundamental truth: these are not our dollars. They belong to the people of Irvine. To all the people of Irvine, not one faction or another.

So it is deeply concerning and frankly, disappointing to see this city now facing a significant deficit. And the residents of Irvine deserve answers, and they deserve accountability.

Before this Council begins targeting programs like DEI initiatives that were approved during years of balanced budgets and sound fiscal management, including being introduced because of a need in the BIPOC community, I would ask them to first look in the mirror.

Council office spending has ballooned. Staff has grown dramatically despite the fact that Irvine transitioned from citywide to district elections. That shift was supposed to reduce the scope of individual council representation. Staff and spending budgets should have been right-sized accordingly. They were not.

Additionally, new departments have been created and new staff hired without proper feasibility reviews. You don't build the house before you check whether you can afford the foundation.

This is not about politics. This is about stewardship. Every dollar spent on an oversized staff, on redundant offices, on vanity and personal projects, that is a dollar taken from Irvine's parks, its seniors, its families, and its future. This is money is not for your use.

I, along with former Mayors Sally Ann Sheridan, Sukhee Kang, and Christina Shea, are calling on this Council to pause any new discretionary spending until a full accounting of its spending since Jan 2025 is done. Conduct a line-by-line review of council office budgets. Audit staffing levels in light of the district election structure. And be honest with the public about how we got here.

The people of Irvine built this city's financial strength through their taxes and their trust. Honor that trust. Spend their money like it's theirs, because it is.

Thank you.