



L.A. Council racist comments >

De León: 'I will not resign.'

Krekorian now leads council

Parents face politi

OPINION

Editorial: Resign, Councilmembers Nury Martinez, Kevin de León and Gil Cedillo



Los Angeles City Councilwoman Nury Martinez recites the pledge of allegiance. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

BY THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

OCT. 10, 2022 **UPDATED** 5:47 PM PT

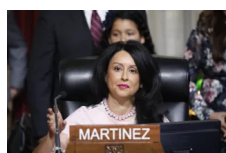
Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez should resign from the council.

There is no way she can fairly represent her constituents after leaked audio captured her [deplorable and racially divisive comments](#), her political machinations to maintain power at the expense of communities, and her use of racist, homophobic tropes to describe her colleague, and worse, his young son. She should leave elected office immediately.

On Monday, when it became apparent that her colleagues were ready to oust her as council president, Martinez announced she would step down from her leadership position. But that is not enough. The casual racism and disregard for colleagues and constituents on the audio revealed a serious rot that cannot be papered over with apologies.

The audio was from a roughly hourlong conversation from October 2021 with Martinez, Councilmembers Gil Cedillo and Kevin de León and Los Angeles County Federation of Labor President Ron Herrera.

Cedillo and De León should resign as well. While Martinez was the ringleader in the conversation, firing off insults and attacks, Cedillo and De León joined in with their own commentary. No city with the racial and ethnic diversity of Los Angeles, and a history of interracial conflict, can tolerate leaders who harbor racist, hate-filled views.



CALIFORNIA

Racist remarks in leaked audio of L.A. council members spark outrage, disgust

Oct. 9, 2022

The discussion focused on the council members' frustrations with maps that had been proposed by the city's 21-member redistricting commission and how they could manipulate the lines for their political benefit, according to The Times' story. The audio was posted on Reddit by a now-suspended user; The Times obtained a copy of the audio.

The discussion in the audio often veered from redistricting into vicious personal attacks. Martinez took aim at Westside Councilmember Mike Bonin, calling him a “little bitch,” and saying the white councilman handled his young Black son as though he were an “accessory.” She described the child, who was 3 years old at the time, as like a “changuito,” or little monkey. De León chimed in, apparently comparing Bonin’s handling of his child to Martinez holding a Louis Vuitton handbag. Martinez even suggested physical harm to the toddler, saying, “I was like, this kid needs a beatdown. Let me take him around the corner and then I’ll bring him back.”

So much for Martinez’s “families first” agenda.

Council President Nury Martinez makes racist remarks about Councilmember Mike Bonin's young son while others chime in during this section of the conversation. The group was discussing a dispute between Councilmembers Curren Price and Marqueece Harris-Dawson, who were at odds last year over whose district would represent USC and Exposition Park once the new maps were finalized. The clip begins with Martinez recounting a conversation she allegedly had with businessman Danny Bakewell.

Bonin called the comments on the recording “vile, abhorrent and utterly disgraceful” on Sunday after news of the recorded comments broke. He added: “It hurts that one of our

son’s earliest encounters with overt racism comes from some of the most powerful public officials in Los Angeles.”

Martinez said of Dist. Atty. George Gascón, “F— that guy,” and “He’s with the Blacks.” While speaking of the ethnic makeup of Koreatown, which has a substantial Oaxacan community, she said, “I was like, I don’t know where these people are from, I don’t know what village they came [from], how they got here,” and added “Tan feos” — “They’re ugly.” Her comments about that community also reveal a despicable bigotry against Indigenous people.

ADVERTISEMENT

Several hours after the news broke Sunday, Martinez issued a statement apologizing for her comments “in a moment of intense frustration and anger” and adding “the context of this conversation was concern over the redistricting process and concern about the potential negative impact it might have on communities of color.”



OPINION

Editorial: In Los Angeles, political meddling poisons redistricting

Oct. 25, 2021

That apology was wholly insufficient — as were those from De León and Cedillo. This was no moment of anger. It was a conversation among political allies strategizing on

how to retain their power and diminish their perceived enemies. To try to explain away the mocking, the laughing and the racist commentary by saying they were driven by concern for “communities of color” is ludicrous and destructive.

Martinez issued a second apology Monday, this time asking forgiveness from her colleagues and from the residents of this city. Cedillo, who lost his reelection bid and leaves office in December, started his short apology with a deflection, saying he “did not engage in the conversation in question,” and acknowledging he should have intervened in the derogatory and racially divisive language.

In his apology, De León said, “I regret appearing to condone and even contribute to certain insensitive comments” about his colleague.

The leaked audio showed just how toxic L.A.’s political leadership has become. They spoke with contempt of anyone who might challenge them or have different ideas, they showed disrespect toward the communities they are supposed to serve. Their inexcusable comments, now made public, have damaged faith in how this city is governed. Martinez, Cedillo and De León have to go.

The Times Editorial Board

The Los Angeles Times’ editorial board determines the positions of The Times as an institution. It operates separately from the newsroom. You can read more about the board’s mission and its members at [About The Times Editorial Board](#).