



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

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October 12, 2015

I would like to address the recent tempest surrounding the fact that neither I nor two of my City Council colleagues signed a non-binding, ceremonial Proclamation declaring the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

First, let me make it clear that I recognize and celebrate the contributions that our Native communities have made at every level of American society. Had the Proclamation focused on celebrating those accomplishments I would have gladly signed it. Unfortunately, Councilor Garduño did not put before the Council a Proclamation celebrating Native peoples and culture. Instead he chose to put before us a Proclamation loaded with inflammatory terms such as “occupation” and that read as a not-so-subtle indictment of the actions of our Founding Fathers and the Spaniards that came to this land five hundred years ago. That is unfortunate both for the Council and for the Native communities.

Second, had Councilor Garduño wanted a *real* discussion of these issues, he would have introduced a Resolution or Ordinance officially declaring the holiday and he would have allowed the full City Council, and ultimately the Mayor, to discuss the matter formally and on the record. Instead, because he knew he had virtually no support for that idea, he tried to sneak the issue through the Council in the form of a ceremonial Proclamation, capitalizing on the courtesy and deference of Councilors when discussing a Proclamation. When three Councilors chose not to sign the Proclamation, Councilor Garduño seized on the opportunity to sow discord and excoriated his fellow Councilors, calling them “cowards.”

Finally, this type of behavior has become a tired pattern with Council President Garduño. One of his very first actions after he was elected Council President was to attempt to quash discussion on an important issue and improperly adjourn and walk out of a Council meeting while there was still business to be discussed. Since then, he has taken every opportunity to personally, from the dais, attack Councilors who disagree with him on the issues. And now he’s using a ceremonial Proclamation intended to bring people together to celebrate Native peoples to attack fellow Councilors.

If Councilor Garduño truly cares about indigenous people, he should do something about it and introduce real legislation that doesn’t belittle anyone, but rather honors the contributions of our indigenous citizens.

I’ve written several censure drafts regarding Councilor Garduño over the last year but spoke with him each time about the concerns, and decided not to introduce the censures for a vote of the Council. This

time, the Council President has exhausted his colleagues' patience. We can no longer condone or excuse his behavior. We have two long months and three meetings of the full Council before his successor is inaugurated. There is too much important business before this body to waste time on Councilor Garduño's petty attacks and feeble grandstanding.

I will make a motion at the next full council meeting on October 19 to introduce the attached censure. And I sincerely hope that Council President Garduño will either moderate his tone and demeanor or step aside to allow the business of the Albuquerque City Council to continue.

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