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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

Brian Lemek
Founder and Executive Director
Defend the Vote
600 Pennsylvania Ave SE #15180
Washington, DC 20003

Complainant, **MUR 8254**

v.

Charlene Nijmeh
409 Tenant Station, No. 422
Morgan Hill, CA 95037,

Charlene for Congress 2024 and Stacy Owens, Treasurer
312 Clay St. Ste. 300
Oakland, California 94607, and

Matt Ricchiazzi, Chief of Staff to Charlene Nijmeh
[REDACTED]
San Jose, CA 95113.

Respondents.

COMPLAINT

This complaint is filed pursuant to 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(1). Complainant is writing to request that the Commission investigate violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act by Charlene Nijmeh, Matt Ricchiazzi, Charlene for Congress 2024 and Stacy Owens as Treasurer (collective, the “Respondents”) for violating provisions of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”), and Federal Election Commission (the “FEC” or “Commission”) regulations.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Charlene Nijmeh is the chairwoman of the Muwekma-Ohlone tribe. On or about October 30, 2023, she filed a statement of candidacy as a candidate for Congress in California's 18th Congressional District.¹ On the same day, she established Charlene for Congress 2024 (the "Committee") to serve as her principal campaign committee.²

According to a recent press report, Nijmeh's campaign has been working with Matt Ricchiazzi, a political consultant who has identified himself as Nijmeh's "chief of staff."³ Ricchiazzi has also, by his own admission, served as a "volunteer" for Nijmeh's campaign.⁴ According to that report, Ricchiazzi is responsible for the production and distribution of a fake newspaper, called "The South Bay Chronicle," that was distributed to the homes of voters across the 18th Congressional District in February 2024.⁵ A copy of that publication is attached as **Exhibit B**.

While the publication resembles a traditional newspaper in appearance, it is anything but. The publication states that it is the "Election Edition," but reporting indicates that the publication has not previously been distributed, making it the only "edition of the publication that has been distributed to date."⁶ Unlike a traditional newspaper, this newspaper does not include a

¹ See Statement of Candidacy, Charlene Concepcion Nijmeh, *available at* <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/H4CA18136/1733988/>.

² See Statement of Organization, Charlene for Congress 2024, *available at* <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/C00855056/1733980/>.

³ Ramona Giargis, Silicon Valley congressional candidate tied to fake newspaper, San Jose Spotlight (Feb. 12, 2024), *available at* <https://sanjosespotlight.com/silicon-valley-congressional-candidate-charlene-nijmeh-tied-to-fake-newspaper-misinformation-zoe-lofgren-election-2024/#:~:text=News%20articles%20in%20a%20publication,Screenshot>. A copy of the article is provided as **Exhibit A**.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

“masthead” that lists the publisher, editor or contact information for the publication.⁷ A search for the name “The South Bay Chronicle” on the California Secretary of State’s website does not identify any corporation or business entity with that name.⁸ Nearly every page of the 24-page publication promotes the election of Nijmeh, levies fake and outlandish attacks on her opponent, incumbent Representative Zoe Lofgren (such as accusing her of “transgendering” minors and enabling global sex trafficking), or does both. The paper includes multiple instances of express advocacy – including endorsements of Nijmeh and photos of her campaign signs – but does not identify who paid for it. Ricchiazzi has admitted that the campaign did not pay him to produce the newspaper.⁹ According to Nijmeh, Ricchiazzi asked her if he could publish articles about the campaign, and she assented, telling him that he could.¹⁰

In order to make the publication appear like a legitimate newspaper, the newspaper includes what appear to be advertisements paid for by sponsors. However, this is a sham. Multiple entities who are identified by the publication, seemingly as advertisers, have indicated that they have never heard of the publication and have denied placing advertisements in the publication.¹¹

This is not the first fake newspaper that Ricchiazzi has sponsored. Ricchiazzi has sponsored other political advertisements masquerading as “journalism,” including the “San Francisco Inquirer.”¹²

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Business Search, California Secretary of State, at <https://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov/search/business> (last visited April 22, 2024).

⁹ Exhibit A.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

Respondents' violations do not end there. Ricchiazzi is identified as the payor on a mailer that was distributed on or about February 28 and that invokes political operative Roger Stone and urges Republican voters to vote for Nijmeh. A copy of that mailer (the "Stone Mailer") is attached as **Exhibit C**. However, the Committee has not reported receiving an in-kind from Ricchiazzi for the Stone Mailer, nor is there any record of Ricchiazzi filing an independent expenditure report with the Commission for the Stone Mailer.

Further, Nijmeh's campaign seems to have distributed mailers that have not been reported and that lack required disclaimers. Two mailers that were distributed by the Committee indicate that they were "Paid for by Charlene for Congress 2024" and include a return address for "Charlene for Congress 2024, 18 South 2nd Street, San Jose, CA 95113." A copy of these mailers are attached as **Exhibit D**. However, another two mailers, attached as **Exhibit E**, bear the same return address but do not indicate who paid for it. And the Committee's 2024 April quarterly report identifies that the Committee incurred debt for mailers, but they identify Nijmeh as the party to whom the debt is owed, rather than the vendor for those mailers, in violation of Commission policy.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

I. The South Bay Chronicle publication violates the Act's contribution limits, reporting requirements and disclaimer requirements.

a. The South Bay Chronicle is a coordinated communication.

Under Commission regulations, a communication will be considered a coordinated communication and, therefore, an in-kind contribution to a candidate if (1) it is paid for by a

person other than a candidate or a political party committee, (2) it contains certain conduct, and (3) it follows certain conduct.¹³ The South Bay Chronicle plainly meets this three-part test.

First, as Ricchiazzi has admitted to the press, neither Nijmeh nor the Committee paid for the communication. Ricchiazzi has taken responsibility for the publication and either he, or a business entity with whom he is associated, paid for the publication. Therefore, the first prong is met.

Second, the South Bay Chronicle contains the type of content that would qualify it as a coordinated communication. “Newspapers” and “magazines” are considered “public communications” under Commission regulations.¹⁴ And this communication expressly advocates for Nijmeh’s election (by containing endorsements of her candidacy and republishing her campaign signs in photographs); contains the functional equivalent of express advocacy in its extended, repeated, and outlandish attacks on Congresswoman Lofgren¹⁵; and identifies both Nijmeh and Congresswoman Lofgren in a communication that was distributed to their electorate during the 90 days before the March 5 primary election.¹⁶ Accordingly, the second prong is met.

Third, there is ample evidence that multiple conduct prongs have been met. Ricchiazzi has admitted to the press that he is a volunteer for the Committee; he also self-identifies as Nijmeh’s chief of staff. Accordingly, he is an agent of Nijmeh. As such, he was materially

¹³ 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(a).

¹⁴ *Id.* § 100.26.

¹⁵ See *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310, 325 (2010) (finding that *Hillary: the Movie*, was the equivalent of express advocacy: “In light of historical footage, interviews with persons critical of her, and voiceover narration, the film would be understood by most viewers as an extended criticism of Senator Clinton's character and her fitness for the office of the Presidency. The narrative may contain more suggestions and arguments than facts, but there is little doubt that the thesis of the film is that she is unfit for the Presidency.”).

¹⁶ 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(c)(3), (4)(i), (5).

involved in the creation and distribution of the sham publication; he has taken credit for authoring it and distributing it.¹⁷

Even if the Commission determines that Ricchiazzi is not an agent of Nijmeh, the conduct prong would still be met. According to the candidate herself, Ricchiazzi asked Nijmeh if he could distribute articles about her, and she provided her approval to do so. Thus, Nijmeh assented to the communication.¹⁸ Moreover, as a volunteer to the campaign and as Nijmeh's chief of staff, Ricchiazzi would have been in possession of nonpublic information about Nijmeh's campaign plans, projects, activities or needs. And given the vast amount of content in the publication, his knowledge about these nonpublic plans, projects, activities and needs would have had to influence at least some of the content contained therein. Accordingly, the "former employee or independent contractor" prong would have also been met.¹⁹

Accordingly, there is ample reason to believe that Ricchiazzi made, and the Committee and Nijmeh received, an in-kind contribution in the form of a coordinated communication. Because this publication was distributed across the district, the cost likely exceeded the Act's limit of \$3,300 in connection with the primary election; and if Ricchiazzi paid for the publication with corporate funds, it would result in a prohibited corporate contribution.²⁰ And the Committee has further violated the Act by failing to report its receipt.²¹

b. The South Bay Chronicle is not subject to the media exemption.

Even though the publication is styled as a newspaper, Respondents cannot avail themselves of the "media exemption." The Act and Commission regulations exempt from the

¹⁷ *Id.* § 109.21(d)(2).

¹⁸ *Id.* § 109.21(d)(1)(ii).

¹⁹ *Id.* § 109.21(d)(5).

²⁰ 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a).

²¹ *See id.* § 30104(b)(3)(A).

definition of “contribution” and “expenditure” “any cost incurred in covering a news story, commentary, or editorial by any broadcasting station ..., web site, newspaper, magazine, or other periodical publication ... unless the facility is owned or controlled by any political party, political committee or candidate.”²² In assessing whether the exemption applies, the Commission conducts a two-step analysis. First, it asks whether the entity engaging in the activity is a press or media entity. Second, it applies the two-part analysis from *Readers Digest Association v. FEC*,²³ which asks (1) whether the entity is owned or controlled by a political party, political committee, or candidate, and (2) whether the press entity is acting in its “legitimate press function.”²⁴

The South Bay Chronicle fails to qualify for the exemption on all fronts. It is not a press or media entity, but a 24-page piece of campaign literature meant to support Nijmeh and attack Congresswoman Lofgren. It contains only de minimis content that is not related to those two candidates, and much of that content, such as the advertisements, appears to have been fabricated in an attempt to camouflage the publication as a legitimate publication (which it is not). Further, it was a one-off publication, rather than a regular publication. Residents were surprised to find this publication delivered to their doors; they had not received the publication until they received the self-described “election edition” of the publication in the month before the 2024 primary election. Accordingly, the publication has no press identity separate from its election-influencing purpose.

Nor is it operating under any economic model used by the recognized press. It does not charge users a subscription fee, nor does it even seem to have advertising revenue. As stated,

²² 11 C.F.R. § 100.73.

²³ 509 F. Supp. 1210, 1215 (S.D.N.Y. 1981),

²⁴ See, e.g., Advisory Opinion 2023-10 (Sony Pictures Television).

while it purports to include paid advertisements, a number of the companies identified as purported advertisers have denied placing advertisements in the publication. Thus, the publication seems to have fabricated advertisements to make it appear as a legitimate press entity. But it is plainly not.

Even if the Commission disagrees with this conclusion, the publication would still not qualify for the exemption. It fails the first prong of the *Readers Digest* test because it is controlled by Nijmeh's agent, her campaign volunteer and chief-of-staff. And it fails the second prong, because, for all of the reasons outlined above, it is not a legitimate press function. As the court in *Reader's Digest Association* noted, the press exemption would not apply where, "for example, on Election Day a partisan newspaper hired an army of incognito propaganda distributors to stand on street corners denouncing allegedly illegal acts of a candidate and sent sound trucks through the streets blaring the same denunciations."²⁵ The publication, rather than a newspaper, is a 24-page piece of political literature, and not a bona fide newspaper. For these reasons, Respondents cannot avail themselves of the press exemption.

c. Even if the South Bay Chronicle is not a coordinated communication, it violates the Act's reporting requirements.

While there is compelling evidence that the publication is a coordinated communication, even if the Commission concludes that the conduct prong was not met, it would still violate the Act's reporting requirements. Because the publication contains express advocacy, if, for argument's sake, it was conducted independently of the Nijmeh campaign, it would have triggered independent expenditure reporting. This would have included reporting the communication within 48 hours if it was distributed more than 20 days and cost \$10,000 or

²⁵ 509 F. Supp. 1210 at 1214; see also *Fed. Election Com. v. Mass. Citizens for Life, Inc.*, 479 U.S. 238, 251 (1986) (distinguishing "fliers" from "regular publications").

more, as well as quarterly reporting.²⁶ To date, Ricchiazzi has failed to so report the communication.

d. The South Bay Chronicle violates the Act's disclaimer requirements.

Under the Act, public communications that expressly advocate for or against the election of a clearly identified candidate that are paid for by a person other than a candidate or candidate's authorized committee must identify the person who paid for the communication and whether or not it was authorized by a candidate.²⁷ As a public communication that expressly advocates for Nijmeh's election, and against Congresswoman Lofgren's, was required to include these identification statements, but it has not.

II. The Stone Mailer violates the Act's contribution limits, reporting requirements and disclaimer requirements.

The Stone Mailer was also a coordinated communication. On its face, it indicates that it was paid for by Ricchiazzi. The mailer meets the content prong of the coordinated communications rule because it contains express advocacy and identifies both Congresswoman Lofgren and Nijmeh and was distributed in their jurisdiction in the 90 days before the March 5, 2024 primary. And, for the same reasons articulated above, the conduct prong of the coordinated communications rule has also been met. Accordingly, the Committee received another in-kind contribution from Ricchiazzi that it failed to report. And the contribution likely exceeded the Act's limits, particularly when the cost of the Stone Mailer is aggregated with the cost of The South Bay Chronicle.

²⁶ 11 C.F.R. § 109.10(b), (c).

²⁷ 52 U.S.C. § 30120(a).

Moreover, whether or not the Stone Mailer was coordinated with Nijmeh and the Committee, it, on its face, violates the Act's disclaimer requirements because it provides the reader with no information about whether or not it was authorized by Nijmeh. And even if, for argument's sake, the Stone Mailer was not coordinated with Nijmeh or her campaign, Ricchiazzi would have been required to report the independent expenditure within 24 hours if the value was \$1,000 or more, and file quarterly reports of his independent expenditures, which he did not.

III. The Charlene for Congress 2024 mailer violates the Act's

Lastly, the Committee has further violated the Act by distributing mailers that violate the Act's disclaimer and reporting requirements. Attached to this Complaint are four mail pieces that the Committee appears to have distributed. Two indicate that they were paid for by the Committee. However, the other two, while bearing the same return address, do not indicate who paid for the mailing. The shared return address suggests that they were paid for by the Committee, but the fact that mailer does not contain a "paid for by" disclaimer violates the Act. Moreover, to date, the Committee has not reported the true recipient of any disbursements to for mail pieces. On its 2024 April Quarterly report, the Committee reported debt being owed to Nijmeh for mailers; however, the Committee has failed to correctly report the ultimate payee for those disbursements.²⁸ Complainant also notes that there are other irregularities in the Committee's 2024 April Quarterly report: (1) numerous disbursements are not accompanied with a description of their purpose, and (2) disbursements to Meta for what appear to be campaign communications are incorrectly reported on line 21 of the report as "other disbursements."

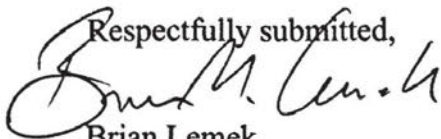
²⁸ *Notice of Interpretive Rule: Reporting Ultimate Payees of Political Committee Disbursements*, 78 Fed. Reg. 40,625, 40,626 (July 8, 2013) ("out-of-pocket spending by candidates, as agents of their authorized committees, requires memo entry itemization of the ultimate payee if the aggregate amount of payments to that vendor exceeds \$200 for the election cycle.")

Accordingly, the Committee has also violated the Act's reporting requirements by not correct disclosing its disbursements and obligations.

CONCLUSION

In short, there is ample reason to believe that Respondents have repeatedly violated the Act and Commission rules. Given the extensive nature of the violations, there is reason to believe that these violations were knowing and willful. We respectfully request that the Commission immediately investigate these allegations, fine Respondents the maximum amount permitted by law, and enjoin Respondents from further violations of the law.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian Lemek

Founder and Executive Director

Defend the Vote

600 Pennsylvania Ave SE #15180

Washington, DC 20003

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 30 day of April 2024.



EDWARD DUNCAN

Notary Public MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MARYLAND

My Commission Expires: 9/23/24



EXHIBIT A

Silicon Valley congressional candidate tied to fake newspaper



by [Ramona Giwargis](#)



and [Brandon Pho](#)

February 12, 2024



Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and challenger Charlene Nijmeh, chairperson of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

A congressional candidate is connected to a fake newspaper that's plastered the South Bay, which mirrors several other misleading websites created by her consultant with ties to Roger Stone and an extreme right-wing agenda.

With a few weeks until Election Day, voters across Silicon Valley are finding a newspaper in their mailboxes called The South Bay Chronicle. It looks convincing with an editorial font title, headlines and stories that mimic major publications.

But a closer look reveals the paper is peddling propaganda and misinformation. The articles contain no author names or dates, and its pages attack San Jose Rep. Zoe Lofgren while promoting one of her political challengers: Charlene Nijmeh.

ELECTION EDITION - FEBRUARY 2024

ZOE LOFGREN THWARTS TECH REGULATIONS DESIGNED TO PROTECT KIDS

LATINO LEADERS SLAM HOUSING SHORTAGE AS 'ETHNIC CLEANSING'



GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING RAGES, ENABLED BY BIG TECH PLATFORMS



The South Bay Chronicle

FEDERAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS: MARCH 5TH

BALLOTS MAILED: FEBRUARY 5TH

BALLOT BOXES OPEN: FEBRUARY 6TH

PARENTS DEBATE TRANSGENDERING TEENS WITHOUT INFORMED CONSENT

San Bruno County Supervisor Peter Hernandez said his supporters have been making noise about Rep. Zoe Lofgren's support of transitioning minors without parental consent. The issue has riled the Mexican American community, which is more culturally conservative than most.



GAMING INTERESTS HAVE THEIR FINGERS IN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Increasing gaming interests have their own role in the struggle to be seen by the federal government, a process of American colonization that is particularly pronounced in California, given the persistence of race, racism, and threatened history that continues to play out.



UC BERKELEY LEADER CALLS ON SENATE TO AFFIRM MUWKA TRIBE'S STATUS

UC Berkeley's Chancellor Carol Christ is urging on tribal status, the Chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, to affirm the Muwka Tribe's federal status. The university is in possession of thousands of tribal remains that belong to this tribe.



NIJMEH PLEDGES TO DONATE HER SALARY FROM CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE UNHOUSED

Charlene Concepcion Nijmeh, the Democrat challenging 30-year incumbent Rep. Zoe Lofgren in the March 5th primary, is pledging to donate her salary from Congress to organizations that support the unhoused.

Nijmeh is the Chairwoman of the Muwka Tribe, a tribe recognized by the Toy Army. Lofgren is one of the most powerful

perched political bosses in Washington.

On social media, Nijmeh described it this way: "I never aspired to run for Congress, but in January of 2023, Rep. Zoe Lofgren demanded I sign away the rights, freedom, and sovereignty of my tribe's children - in exchange for her agreeing to support legislation that would have extremely

affirmed our federal status. At the urging of my Council, I rejected that extortionate demand."

"My People-First policy agenda will lower housing costs, make our streets safer, and protect our children from the harm of social media and technologies that have been used to victimize too many," Nijmeh writes. "My opponent will have enormous sums

of money from Big Tech - and she will continue to threaten any attempt to regulate the industry in Congress. Now more than ever, Big Tech needs to be regulated, but my opponent refuses."

"Children are being victimized. Humans are being trafficked by drug cartels, and the tech companies enable them."

BIG TECH HAS INVESTED HEAVILY IN LOFGREN'S PROTECTION RACKET

Rep. Zoe Lofgren has taken more contributions from the Big Tech giants than nearly anyone else in Congress. She has represented Silicon Valley for nearly 30 years, and is quick to do the bidding of the tech titans in Congress.

Under normal circumstances, supporting the home-town factory in a factory town is good politics. But with a global sex trafficking epidemic that is spiraling out of control, these are

not normal times. Voters are outraged that Congress has chronically failed to hold big tech accountable for the modern-day slave trade that is enabled with their technologies at scale.

Lofgren is a key crony of importance for Big Tech. She is both the Ranking Member of the Science and Technology Committee, while also being the second-most senior member of the Judiciary Committee.



Screenshot of a publication called The South Bay Chronicle, which is pushing misinformation related to a congressional election.

Nijmeh, chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe since 2018, is working with political consultant Matthew Ricchiazzi who's notorious for creating a slew of fake news sites — including The Buffalo Chronicle and San Francisco Inquirer. The tribe is one of Ricchiazzi's clients, and he calls himself the “chief of staff to the chairwoman” in emails sent to federal lawmakers obtained by San José Spotlight.

The Buffalo Chronicle published stories alleging Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau bribed his way into suppressing a sex scandal, among other claims. An investigation by BuzzFeed News and the Toronto Star found that Ricchiazzi offered to publish positive or negative coverage of political candidates for money.

Ricchiazzi was exposed by [the San Francisco Chronicle](#) last year as the operator of the San Francisco Inquirer, another fake news website that posts sensational and politically-slanted articles. It contains more attacks on Lofgren — including a recent post blaming her for sex trafficking — alongside real news releases including one from San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan on artificial intelligence.

The newly-launched South Bay Chronicle — which doesn't appear to have a website — features more than 20 pages in its February edition accusing Lofgren of thwarting regulations to protect kids from online predators because of support from “Big Tech,” orchestrating the housing crisis, voting against immigration measures and claiming her “crusade for abortion” and “transgendering” children without consent is alienating conservative Latinos, among other claims.

Ricchiazzi said he volunteers his time to help with Nijmeh's campaign, but does not work for her. He claimed the publication is not paid political advertising and is not affiliated with Nijmeh's campaign. He said his publications are a counter reaction to what he called the corporate media agenda.

“It's an independent hobby project of mine,” he told San José Spotlight. “It's not campaign material. It wasn't produced or authorized by the (Nijmeh) campaign. It wasn't funded by the campaign. I produce my independent journalism, independently. I've done this for many years under many different mastheads.”

One of the paper's most outlandish headlines accuses Lofgren's attorney husband of making “millions” off the displacement of people of color due to the Bay Area's housing crisis.

Lofgren's husband is an estate attorney who works on wills and trusts, not housing laws or policy.

"I urge anyone trying to enter public service to be honest and civil," Lofgren told San José Spotlight. "It is sad for American democracy when disinformation and lies are what a candidate relies on."



News articles in a publication called the The South Bay Chronicle are peddling false information on Rep. Zoe Lofgren and her husband John Collins benefitting

from a housing crisis. Screenshot.

The paper features numerous articles promoting Nijmeh and her candidacy — and unlike other political campaign materials, it does not have a campaign ID number or disclosure about who paid for it as required by law. Campaign identification disclaimers are required for any political messages.

“They are definitely violating the law,” said Ann Ravel, a Silicon Valley attorney and former member of the Federal Elections Commission. She added that fake newspapers are a common form of political campaigning.

“Especially when they’re attack ads,” she added. “That is probably the reason they’re not identifying whether they exist or who they are, because they probably believe it is in their interest to attack and have people think it’s something that is a newspaper or some other commentary that is legal and thoughtful — one that actually exists.”

In one article, Nijmeh is posing next to longtime East San Jose leader [Blanca Alvarado](#) — and claims the matriarch has endorsed her campaign to unseat Lofgren.

Alvarado told San José Spotlight she did not endorse Nijmeh.

“I am aghast at this propaganda of lies,” Alvarado said. “I did not endorse her nor do I even know how to contact her.”

FEBRUARY 2024

The South Bay Chronicle | 6

LATINO VOTERS FIND COMMON CAUSE IN CHARLENE CONCEPCIÓN NIJMEH'S CAMPAIGN

San Jose's historic Mexican American population — which predates the state of California — is finding common cause with the upstart congressional candidate who is taking on one of Washington's oldest political dynasties. Charlene Nijmeh has been demanding that 30-year incumbent Rep. Zoe Lofgren answers for her longstanding failures on housing affordability and homelessness.

Santa Clara County has one of the highest homelessness populations in the nation. It's also one of the least affordable housing markets, with a stunning housing shortage that is the result of exclusionary zoning policies that prevent the market from bringing new housing supply into the market, largely by prioritizing the interests of single-family homeowners over the interests of renters and young people in municipal zoning laws.

The housing shortage sends prices skyrocketing, forcing significant fractions of the community into homelessness or out of the region altogether.

"Gentrification is an existential threat to my people. The Bay Area is our Tribe's 20,000-year-old homeland, and our young people can't afford to live here," Nijmeh explains on social media. "What's happening to our community is also happening to the Latino community. To be frank, it's also happening to the Vietnamese and Filipino communities as well."

"I feel the American dream slipping away for our people, who feel that home ownership will never be attainable to them," she says. "We need to bring it back."

Nijmeh's message — of her people's struggle against displacement from its ancient homelands — is in many ways the same struggle faced by all marginalized communities that struggle more

similar circumstances of economic marginalization. No two ethnic groups are more closely aligned in their socio-political circumstances. Both populations suffer from being targeted by law enforcement in a pattern of structural 'ghettoized' racism.

Both populations struggle with housing affordability and are at risk of being gentrified out of the city by the growth of the tech industry. Both communities are very under-represented among the tech industry's labor force, creating an enormous dis-alignment of interests between the growth of the tech industry and the well-being of the Latino and Ohlone communities.


Preventing the 'ethnic cleansing' of the Muwekma Ohlone and Mexican American communities from San Jose will require the same policy solutions, creating a profound alignment of political interests, like ensuring that local law enforcement adopts anti-racist policies. Many Latino and Muwekma Ohlone residents are often treated with disrespect and suffer indignities in their own neighborhoods. Leaders in both communities have long complained of the egregious rates of the incarceration of Latino and Muwekma men.

"Ensuring that the region has an ample supply of new affordable housing units will help prevent the displacement of marginalized populations from San Jose. We must demand that the Bay Area tech giants create local workforce training programs that create pathways to job opportunities in the tech industry for local residents. Social mobility and economic integration should be important regional priorities. We just need leadership," Nijmeh wrote in a message to supporters on social media.

Despite decades of lip service and commitments of support, Lofgren openly betrayed

Blanca Alvarado backs Nijmeh

Legendary social justice leader endorses Charlene for Congress



Blanca Alvarado, born 1931, is a social justice activist and former politician. She was the first Latina elected to the San Jose City Council and the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and was the first Latina to serve as the board's chairperson. The daughter of a coal miner who was active in union organizing, she was born in the Colorado mining town of Cokedale. After the mine's closure, the family moved to the Santa Clara Valley in California, where she graduated from San Jose High School.

She hosted her own radio program on KLOK radio and worked with Cesar Chavez to establish the Community Services Organization, the Chicano Employment Committee, and the Opportunities Industrial Center. She was president of the local chapter of the Mexican American Political Association. In 1980, she was elected to San Jose City Council and represented East San Jose until 1994. Alvarado served two terms as San Jose's first Latina Vice Mayor. In 1995, she was appointed to fill a vacant position in the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors (created by Zoe Lofgren's departure for Congress) and she was elected to the position the following year. Alvarado spent 12 years representing District 2 and retired from the Board in 2008, after 28 years in municipal politics.

During her time in office, she fought for better representation of the Chicano community of San Jose, helped foster the arts and advocated on behalf of youth and minorities. Among many other committee assignments, she served as chair of the Services Committee, council liaison for the Arts Commission, a significant role in the Hispanic community, improving the city's decision-making process. Alvarado's efforts to improve the County's juvenile justice system. She established the Women's Advocacy Center to develop programs to develop in the community and personal development. Many accomplishments were substantial, including the Santa Clara County Center and the Mexican Heritage Center, the largest in the county.

estate developers. They also point to her record on incarceration reform.

eral population. Though statistics are few and far between, testimony from experts, activists, and trib-

Member Technol

East San Jose leader Blanca Alvarado said she has not endorsed Charlene Nijmeh's campaign against Rep. Zoe Lofgren, contrary to what's been put out in a

publication called The South Bay Chronicle. Screenshot.

Ricchiazzi denies publishing a false endorsement from Alvarado and insisted she endorsed the campaign in his presence by signing Nijmeh's campaign petition.

"Blanca is a legend, whom I respect very much, but she is 92 years old and she is being pressured by Democratic Party operatives to reverse her endorsement," he told San José Spotlight.

The paper also touts the endorsement of a Watsonville mayor who left office two years ago.

Nijmeh acknowledged the publication appears to be Ricchiazzi's work — whom she called an "indigenous independent journalist" — but claimed she knew nothing about it.

"Matthew did ask me if I minded if he followed the campaign and published articles on his site. I told him as long as you publish the truth, I would not silence anyone's voice trying to uplift our people," Nijmeh told San José Spotlight. "So if he published an endorsement without anyone's permission, that will cross the line."

Nijmeh added that she does not endorse the publication and neither does her campaign.

"I am very upset about any publication that would print an endorsement by Blanca Alvarado that she did not offer," she said. "I consider Blanca to be a friend of my mother, my tribe and myself and I did have a conversation about my candidacy during a get together but she never offered an endorsement."

Alvarado isn't the only politician being dragged into the fray.

Some of Nijmeh's campaign materials feature photos of herself with Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, a close friend and colleague of Logren's, to insinuate support. Pelosi shot down the claim in a letter this week.

"We were quite surprised to see that somebody who is running against our colleague and friend Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren had recently sent a campaign brochure with our photos, giving the false impression that she may have our support in this race. That is not true," Pelosi said in a letter co-signed by House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries. "Visitors often ask to take pictures with us — and we always try to be courteous and accommodating. Politics can be a messy sport, but it's pretty disgraceful to use our images to try to mislead voters."

Controversial ties

Ricchiazzi has troubling ties to convicted felons and controversial figures like Roger Stone. He's also promoted lies about the Jan. 6 insurrection and former President Donald Trump's debunked claims of voter fraud after his 2020 election defeat.

Ricchiazzi in 2018 called for Stone to begin whipping votes to become the next speaker of the House after Paul Ryan's departure.

Stone and Ricchiazzi both wrote articles for another outlet named Artvoice.

Artvoice owner Frank Parlato, Jr. [ran his articles](#) in Ricchiazzi's publications, and wrote dozens more lambasting Lofgren on a separate site called Frank Report. Parlato in 2022 was convicted of fraud and taking money from a liquor heir charged in a criminal conspiracy involving sex trafficking, identity theft and money laundering. Parlato called Stone a "friend" and solicited donations for his legal fees. His articles also appear on Stone's website, The Stone Zone.

Ricchiazzi also operates a Facebook page called Reform New York that's posted racist and homophobic content, along with more attacks on Lofgren. He tags Trump and his children in the posts criticizing Lofgren.

Misinformation about Rep. Zoe Lofgren is circulating

In San Jose, The South Bay Chronicle is raising red flags for many.

“Has anybody heard of this newspaper?” a resident posted on Reddit. “Someone put it on all the porches in my neighborhood. It seems super politically slanted and I’m thinking it’s propaganda.”

The question was met by dozens of responses — people from San Jose to Gilroy — who said they also received The South Bay Chronicle at their front doors. All questioned its validity.

The paper also features ads from companies and organizations that appear to have no ties to the publication. The ads include KSBW, an NBC affiliate in the central coast, and a collective of wineries and car dealerships in Morgan Hill. It advertises a website that appears to post anti-Israel ideology.

A spokesperson for the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley Association said the ad in The South Bay Chronicle appears to be from 2022 and was likely pulled off another website.

“We never advertised with this paper and don’t support plagiarism or spreading fake news,” said Stacy Giannini, the association’s director of marketing.

Ricchiazzi did the same thing in San Francisco. He published logos of prominent companies in the San Francisco Inquirer to imply they’re advertisers. Many of them told the Chronicle they’d never heard of the outlet.

Disputing claims

Lofgren and her team disputed the paper’s claims — from her record on immigration to her stance on tech industry regulations.

The veteran congresswoman said sowing confusion about issues like immigrant and transgender rights plays into “despicable right-wing bigotry.”

“This fake news and disinformation model — used consistently by the Trump-Stone-Ricchiazzi right-wing ecosystem — and now actively embraced by Charlene for Congress leads to public skepticism and undermines the integrity of our elections,” Lofgren said. “To think that using GOP culture war bills, with misleading names and

dangerous policy consequences, will sway the savvy voters in this district is insulting and deeply troubling.”

Her colleague in congress, Rep. Anna Eshoo, said Lofgren has a great deal of integrity and denounced the attacks from Nijmeh.

“I’ve been in elective office for 42 years and I’ve never met anyone as deceitful as this woman. She constantly misrepresents the truth,” Eshoo told San José Spotlight. “This woman should be as far away from the Congress as possible.”

The crusade by Nijmeh and Ricchiazzi against Lofgren traces back to a January 2023 meeting with the veteran legislator.

The meeting, which included Eshoo and Bay Area Reps. Ro Khanna, Eric Swalwell and Jimmy Panetta, focused on the Muwekma’s fight for federal recognition. The tribe’s request for recognition — which provides access to federal benefits and protections — was denied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2002.

Lofgren has supported the tribe’s efforts to gain recognition, but opposes granting them gaming rights. Most federal bills that have recognized tribes include anti-gambling provisions, the congresswoman’s office said.

Nijmeh said her tribe deserves the same gaming rights granted to others. The South Bay Chronicle featured a full-page article envisioning what the tribe’s casino could look like — including replacing the “indefensibly tacky” Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco.

The article, which has no author, claims the tribe has been approached by developers who propose a 300,000-square-foot casino, 4,000 hotel rooms and condos, and a public square and amphitheater spanning three blocks.

The tribe won’t cede its gaming rights, Nijmeh said in the article, and would consider gaming if approached by a city like San Francisco or San Jose.

Lofgren said that’s a nonstarter — especially after the baseless attacks leveled by Nijmeh, Ricchiazzi and the misinformation they’re spreading through The South Bay Chronicle.

“It is disrespectful to the voters in California’s 18th congressional district that one of my opponents has chosen to embrace fake news and disinformation and deceive the public about endorsements as part of her campaign,” Lofgren said. “It’s disgusting

that anyone running to represent this district would spend thousands of dollars to spread transphobic and anti-immigrant propaganda.”

Contact Ramona Giwargis at ramona@sanjosespotlight.com or follow @RamonaGiwargis on X, formerly known as Twitter. Contact Brandon Pho at brandon@sanjosespotlight.com or @brandonphooo on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Editor's note: Ann Ravel serves on San José Spotlight's board of directors.

EXHIBIT B

ZOE LOFGREN THWARTS TECH REGULATIONS DESIGNED TO PROTECT KIDS

LATINO LEADERS SLAM HOUSING SHORTAGE AS 'ETHNIC CLEANSING'



GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING RAGES, ENABLED BY BIG TECH PLATFORMS



The South Bay Chronicle

FEDERAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS: MARCH 5TH

BALLOTS MAILED: FEBRUARY 5TH

BALLOT BOXES OPEN: FEBRUARY 6TH

PARENTS DEBATE TRANSGENDERING TEENS WITHOUT INFORMED CONSENT

San Benito County businessman Peter Hernandez and his supporters have been making noise about Rep. Zoe Lofgren's support of transitioning minors without parental consent. The issue has riled the Mexican American community, which is more culturally conservative than most.



GAMING INTERESTS HAVE THIER FINGERS IN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Wealthy gaming interests have their foot on the neck of unrecognized Tribes struggling to be seen by the federal government, a phenom of American colonialism that is particularly pronounced in California, given the particularly dark, violent, and unresolved history that continues to play out.



UC BERKELEY LEADER CALLS ON SENATE TO AFFIRM MUWEKMA TRIBE'S STATUS

UC Berkeley's Chancellor Carol Christ is calling on Brian Schatz, the Chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, to affirm the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's federal status. The university is in possession of thousands of burial remains that belong to the Tribe.



NIJMEH PLEDGES TO DONATE HER SALARY FROM CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE UNHOUSED

Charlene Concepción Nijmeh, the Democrat challenging 30-year incumbent Rep. Zoe Lofgren in the March 5th primary, is pledging to donate her salary from Congress to organizations that support the unhoused.

Nijmeh is the Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, aboriginal to the Bay Area. Lofgren is one of the most power-

fully-perched political bosses in Washington.

On social media, Nijmeh described it this way: "I never aspired to run for Congress, but in January of 2023, Rep. Zoe Lofgren demanded I sign away the rights, freedoms, and sovereignty of my Tribe's children - in exchange for her agreeing to support legislation that would have ostensibly

affirmed our federal status. At the urging of my Council, I rejected that extortionate demand."

"My People-First policy agenda will lower housing costs, make our streets safer, and protect our children from the harms of social media and technologies that have been used to victimize too many," Nijmeh writes. "My opponent will have enormous sums

of money from Big Tech - and she will continue to thwart any attempt to regulate the industry in Congress. Now more than ever, Big Tech needs to be regulated, but my opponent refuses."

"Children are being victimized. Humans are being trafficked by drug cartels, and the tech companies enable them."

BIG TECH HAS INVESTED HEAVILY IN LOFGREN'S PROTECTION RACKET

Rep. Zoe Lofgren has taken more contributions from the Big Tech giants than nearly anyone else in Congress. She has represented Silicon Valley for nearly 30 years, and is quick to do the bidding of the tech titans in Congress.

Under normal circumstances, supporting the hometown factory in a factory town is good politics. But with a global sex trafficking epidemic that is spiraling out of control, these are

not normal times. Voters are outraged that Congress has chronically failed to hold Big Tech accountable for the modern-day slave trade that is enabled with their technologies, at scale.

Lofgren is a key crux of importance for Big Tech. She is both the Ranking Member of the Science and Technology Committee, while also being the second most-senior member of the Judiciary Committee.

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NIJMEH PLEDGES TO DONATE HER SALARY FROM CONGRESS TO LOCAL CHARITIES THAT SUPPORT THE UNHOUSED



Since she has been serving as Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, Charlene Concepción Nijmeh has been forgoing a salary so that the Tribe could put those resources into other programs and initiatives. When she is in Congress, she wants to continue that tradition. She is pledging to donate the \$174,000 salary that members of Congress receive to local charities in the 18th district that support the unhoused.

Nijmeh is an independently successful businesswoman whose textile recycling business grew into a global enterprise with operations around the world.

"I don't want to make a career of this. I want to go there for two or three terms to achieve specific legislative objectives in three areas: 1) addressing the nation's housing shortage and the affordability crisis; 2) regulating Big Tech to better protect children on the internet; and 3) reaffirming California's wrongly unrecognized tribes," Nijmeh explains.

"It would be nice to pass a national textile recycling law, too, but I understand that there are only so many hours in the day," she jokes. "The People's House is best served with fresh ideas and the spirit of the times, so it would be unconscionably selfish to get stale and dusty there," she explains.

For the period of time that she is serving in Congress,

Nijmeh will voluntarily commit to not owning any publicly traded stocks. Nijmeh believes that the insider trading epidemic on Capitol Hill is badly damaging to the nation's democracy, and in order for her to address it credibly Nijmeh feels as though she must hold herself to the highest ethical standards.

"I challenge Rep. Lofgren to make those same commitments: donate your salary to charity and stop trading stocks while in Congress," she posits.

Nijmeh has refused all corporate PAC money. Lofgren, on the other hand, is unabashedly rolling in it.

"I will hold myself to the highest ethical standards. I will not own any stocks while I serve in Congress."

Political observers do not expect Lofgren to meet that same ethics commitment, and is expected to continue to receive nearly two-thirds of her campaign contributions from special interest PACs and corporate campaign finance vehicles.

Charlene Concepción Nijmeh is rejecting corporate PAC money, and she promises not to hold, buy, or trade public stocks while she is serving in Congress.



NIJMEH WANTS LOFGREN TO ANSWER FOR FAILURES ON HOUSING POLICY, AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Charlene Concepción Nijmeh is proposing legislation that would build millions of new homes and would create a decades-long construction boom.



M&T Bank has been investing heavily in fin-tech innovation and enhancing its capacity to spawn new technologies and consumer product offerings. A new Innovation Hub at the Seneca Tower in downtown Buffalo has just opened in recent months. While the commercial bank will forever be at the core of M&T and its brand, he expects it to evolve into an industrial conglomerate. Jones believes that ongoing tensions with Russia and China will drive the on-shoring of industrial supply chains.

Despite California's advanced economy and robust tech industry, housing costs here are crushing working families. Egregiously high rents are pushing long-time population demographics - like San Jose's indigenous people and its historic Mexican community - out of the region or out of the State altogether.

In 2022, California ranked first in housing shortages in the United States, according to a report from Up for Growth. According to the consulting company McKinsey, the shortage of two million homes is forecast to increase to 3.5 million by 2025.

California ranks 49th out of 50 states in housing affordability. With a population of over 40 million, barely seven million resi-

estate. Young people who are just starting their personal lives also find themselves in difficult situations. For them, renting a home in California is an extremely heavy financial burden and buying real estate is practically impossible.

At the same time, according to the California Department of Housing and Community Development, more than 1.2 million housing units were vacant in California in 2022. One reason for such disparity was the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a significant exodus of residents from cities to rural areas.

Meanwhile, California is a leader among states in the number of homeless people.

As of the summer of 2023, according to CNN, California is home to 170,000 homeless individuals - just under a third of the total nationwide. From 2018 to 2022, the state spent a record \$175 billion to "combat" homelessness. During this time the number of homeless individuals increased. The COVID-19 pandemic and the chain of economic and social problems it caused exacerbated the crisis.

Funding for homelessness prevention through 2024 amounts to \$20.8 billion, and the spending programs are unlikely to help break the situation in the foreseeable future.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's Chairwoman, Charlene Concepción Nijmeh, has outlined a Housing Supply and Affordability Act of 2025, which she plans to introduce on the floor of Congress upon her election to the House of

Representatives.

"Even our most senior members of Congress ignore the housing crisis. They have no strategy to solve this problem. They don't even have the courage to acknowledge it," Nijmeh said. "America is moving backwards in terms of the types of homes that our next generation will be able to afford."

Silicon Valley is the epicenter for technology development and innovation in the United States. It is home to companies like Apple, Cisco, Facebook, Adobe, and a slew of other tech giants. Throughout her career, Rep. Lofgren has repeatedly lobbied for their interests and has received substantial donations in turn.

This relationship has not benefited long-time residents, who suffer from the gentrification of the region, which is largely driven by the tech industry.

Nijmeh notes that residents of deteriorating communities, such as in San Jose, are forced to move in search of housing and a better life outside the cities. This is evidence of gentrification and elitism, with indigenous peoples and the underprivileged becoming victims under the pressure of corporations.

"I'm going to fight for the young people who feel like home ownership will never be attainable. Together, we're going to bring back the American Dream," Nijmeh explains. "We need to drastically increase housing supply."

UPZONING URBAN AREAS WOULD BE REWARDED WITH MONEY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE

First, Nijmeh wants to encourage municipalities to up-zone urban areas. Her plan would reward communities that are willing to accommodate now high density affordable housing with 'Infrastructure Block Grants' that would fund transit and sewer improvements - in addition to financing for new below-market rental units.

"In the Bay Area, many municipalities will benefit from these grants for infrastructure. Cities like San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, San Jose, and Sacramento could receive billions in federal funding - along with modern, functional, possibly extensive public transportation systems. We need to build, build, build more homes so that every resident has housing they can afford," Nijmeh explains.

Second, Nijmeh's plan would create a federal Affordable Housing Tax Credit. That credit would incentivize private sector investment in affordable housing by offering matching federal dollars for the construction of rental units that are offered deeply below market prices. That federal investment could amount to as much as \$1 trillion and would finance 66 million new homes.

Third, Nijmeh's plan would accelerate financing tools for supportive housing managed by non-profit service providers, to address the segment of the population that is chronically unhoused as a result of mental health disorders or drug addictions.

Fourth, Nijmeh's legislation would make some federal lands available near small cities in rural areas to enable the 'tiny house' trend that has been growing in popularity. Making plots available for new manufactured, modular, or mobile housing will alleviate demand pressures in rural communities that are also facing supply constraints. In California, this would create badly needed housing opportunities for farm workers and transitional housing for formerly incarcerated individuals.

At the same time, Rep. Zoe Lofgren is implementing an opposing policy. In 2018, she voted against transferring federal infrastructure to the control of state and local governments, which could have addressed housing shortages, especially in rural communities. If unused federal buildings and federal lands could be used by local authorities, it would go a long way to empowering local governments to construct needed housing units.

The housing shortage is worsening across the United

States. According to *Route Fifty*, there are 8,000 vacant federal buildings (schools, nursing homes, military installations, etc.) in the United States that could be used for resettling the homeless or for other social needs.

According to *The Los Angeles Times*, the federal government has 77,000 vacant buildings on its balance sheet, with an annual budget of \$1.7 billion spent on their maintenance. For decades, the government has been unable to solve this problem due to excessive bureaucratic complexities. Many agencies do not know which real estate belongs to them and what to do with it.

As of August 2023, there were 577,000 homeless people in the USA. The number of homeless has increased by 11% over the last year. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, this is a consequence of rising rental prices and the cessation of pandemic subsidies.

A potential solution to the problem could have been a bill transferring federal real estate to state and local governments, against which Zoe Lofgren voted in 2018.

Complicating matters, the United States is currently facing another wave of migrant influx. According to *Voice of America*, in 2022, over a million migrants arrived in the country, which is 168% more than in 2021. CBS News reports that, for example, in New York in 2023, hotels accommodated 60,000 migrants and over 50,000 homeless individuals. In Chicago 7,000 migrants were housed in police stations and parks.

Adding to Lofgren's weakness on the housing issue are two votes that will be hard for her to explain to those voters who are teetering on the brink of homelessness. In both 2015 and 2017, Lofgren voted against the Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act, which would have made it easier for people to finance and purchase prefabricated housing units.

In 2018, Lofgren voted against the THRIVE Act, the Transitional Housing for Recovery in Viable Environments Demonstration Program Act. That law would have authorized the use of Section 8 housing vouchers to provide temporary housing to individuals recovering from opioid addictions.

Those bills were introduced by Republicans, and Lofgren is a fever-pitched partisan who regularly refuses to collaborate across party lines.



Rep. Zoe Lofgren has been effective at thwarting legislative efforts to regulate the tech industry, even in light of the negative impacts of social media on the mental health of children, and the role that technology plays in enabling the sex trafficking epidemic. The explosive growth of Silicon Valley's tech industry is responsible for San Jose's ongoing gentrification - which threatens to push the historic Mexican American community out of the city.

"The only way to bring prices down in a sustained way is to drastically increase supply."

dents own their own homes. According to the real estate agency RubyHome, in 2023, more than 39.5 million California residents occupied 13.6 million housing units. That makes the State's housing stock the most over-crowded in the United States.

One of the main reasons for this situation is the shortage of affordable housing for middle-income and lower-income populations who cannot afford to buy real

NIJMEH IS PROPOSING A SERIES OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES:

LIMIT ACCESS TO PORNOGRAPHY

The legislation would require that online pornography is entirely paywalled, so that minors don't have immediate and free access to it.

A federal ban on freely available pornography will require consumers to enter credit card or other payment information that will act as an age verification measure.

In addition to shielding minors from harmful content, supporters of the policy say that it will benefit adult performers in the adult film industry. The absence of free online pornography will drive consumers to private subscription websites, which would be likely to generate a large influx of subscription revenue.

Those new revenues would enable adult entertainers to unionize and demand workforce investments.

PARENTAL CONSENT TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

The legislation would require minors to obtain parental consent to download apps to smartphones that enable communication with adults.

Nijmeh wants to empower parents to better control and monitor their child's social media usage. Any software that would enable an adult to communicate with a minor would require parental consent.

BAN MARKETING TO CHILDREN

The legislation would ban tech companies from directly marketing new products to children. Product intended for children would require federal approval from a new consumer protection agency, similar to the way that pharmaceutical companies are required to secure FDA approval before marketing medical drugs.

Nijmeh wants to stop Big Tech companies from experimenting on children with untested technologies that have unknown, and potentially deeply detrimental, impacts when used on a sustained basis over time. She wants federal regulators to evaluate the harms of these products on young developing brains — particularly their addictive properties — before they can be marketed to children. She likens approach to the previous generation's handling of Big Tobacco's exploitation of children.

NIJMEH PLEDGES TO PROTECT CHILDREN ONLINE, SLAMS LOFGREN'S RECORD ON BIG TECH

Charlene Nijmeh is pledging to disrupt the longstanding practice of Silicon Valley's Big Tech corporations profiting from harmful technology products that are marketed to children. Advertisers are willing to pay big dollars to communicate hyper-commercial and often sexually complicated messages to the developing brains of children.

Over the last decade, as these social media technologies have proliferated, rates of bullying, depression, and youth suicide have skyrocketed.

As a mother of five, Nijmeh has made combating the dangers of the internet a central focus of her campaign. Among other things, she has pledged to introduce legislation that would require all pornography on the internet to be pay-walled, so that it is not readily available to minors. To access it, one would be required to provide a credit card.

Nijmeh also pledges to hold Big Tech accountable for its role in enabling global sex trafficking.

"When I am elected to Congress, Big Tech will be held responsible for the damage they have done to our youth," declared Nijmeh. "We are going to hold Big Tech accountable the same way that a previous generation held Big Tobacco accountable to protect our children."

To achieve this, Nijmeh

is drafting legislation that would require social media products and services to seek approval from the FDA or another consumer protection agency that will be tasked with evaluating the potential harms, psychological impacts, and addictive behaviours that are associated with the technology products.

Whether through modernizing and expanding the role of the FDA, or setting up another consumer protection agency to deal specifically with technology products, Nijmeh aims to safeguard the social and psychological well-being of minors. Her approach parallels the national campaign against tobacco, where

"The internet is a very dangerous place for our children, but it doesn't have to be."

cigarette manufacturers once heavily targeted youth in their marketing and advertising.

Similarly, Nijmeh would ban companies from advertising or marketing social media products directly to minors. Some drafts of Nijmeh's legislation would

require parental consent for minors to download applications to smartphones or to subscribe to software products that would enable them to communicate with adults.

Nijmeh also intends to hold Big Tech accountable for accommodating transactions that enable human trafficking. She plans to leverage artificial intelligence to identify internet content associated with human trafficking.

"The internet is a very dangerous place for our children, but it doesn't have to be. We just need a Congresswoman who is willing to refuse Big Tech's corporate campaign contributions so that we can do the work of regulating the industry impartially, with the interests of the American people first and foremost," she explains.

In 2011, Lofgren refused to vote for the Protecting Children from Internet Pornographers Act, despite being on the floor of the House of Representatives during the vote. Even Nancy Pelosi voted in favor of the law, but Lofgren couldn't bring herself to vote for it.

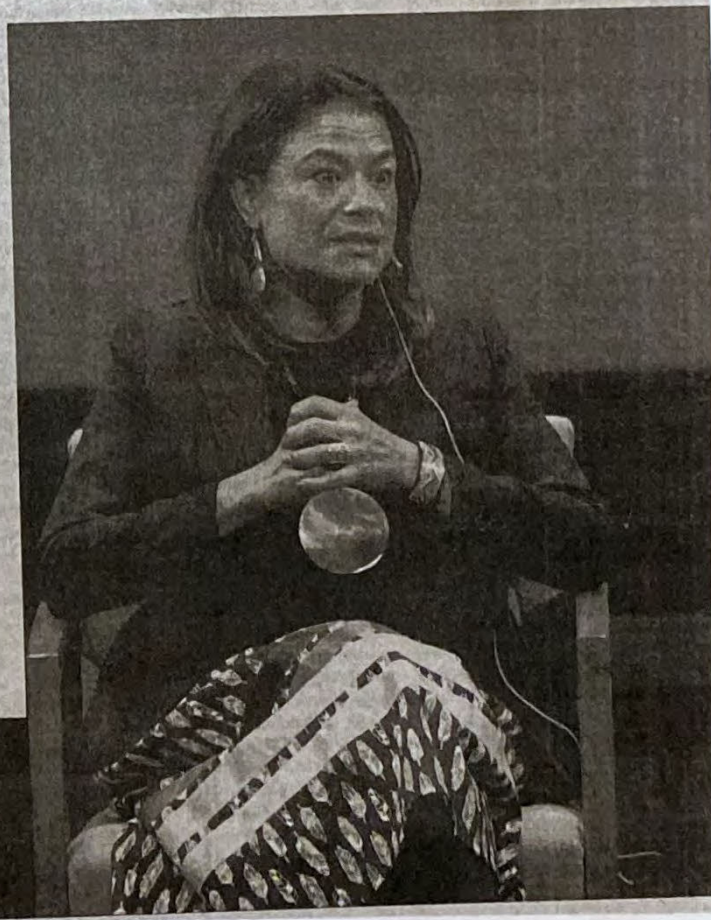
In 2017, the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act was enacted, but Lofgren refused to vote in favor of it. This law amends the Communications Act of 1934 and enables the prosecution of website owners who post explicit or covert advertisements for prostitution, sexual services, and child exploitation.

Violators can face significant fines or up to 25 years in prison.

Thanks in part to this law, the individuals behind the backpage website, which had been hosting overt and veiled advertisements for sexual services for years, were brought to justice. A Senate report reveals that in 2011, 93% of the site's revenue came from advertising with 70 to 80% of those ads being veiled prostitution postings. The website's administrators simply removed keywords and phrase indicating the nature of the services. The Senate report even lists words such as "Lolita" and "litt girl" that confirmed the promotion of sex with minors.

In the past, website activities were regulated solely by the outdated Communications Decency Act, which was established in 1996 and shielded website owners from liability for user-generated content. In 2017, Congress, following extensive debates, granted the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) the authority to protect the confidential data of internet users. These regulations establish consistent oversight how internet service providers handle personal data, consider it equivalent to medical or social security information. Lofgren voted in favor of legislation to reverse that rule.

"You can have all of the seniority in the world, but if you're going to sell our children down the river so that your campaign donors can make a buck, then what is that seniority really worth to us?"



LATINO VOTERS FIND COMMON CAUSE IN CHARLENE CONCEPCIÓN NIJMEH'S CAMPAIGN

San Jose's historic Mexican American population — which predates the State of California — is finding common cause with the upstart congressional candidate who is taking on one of Washington's oldest political bosses. Charlene Nijmeh has been demanding that 30-year incumbent Rep. Zoe Lofgren answers for her longstanding failures on housing affordability and homelessness.

Santa Clara County has one of the highest homelessness populations in the nation. It's also one of the least affordable housing markets, with a stunning housing shortage that is the result of exclusionary zoning policies that prevent the market from bringing new housing supply into the market, largely by prioritizing the interests of single-family homeowners over the interests of renters and young people in municipal zoning laws.

The housing shortage sends prices skyrocketing, forcing significant fractions of the community into homelessness or out of the region altogether.

"Gentrification is an existential threat to my people. The Bay Area is our Tribe's 10,000-year-old homeland, and our young people can't afford to stay here," Nijmeh explains on social media. "What's happening to my community is also happening to the Latino community. To be frank, it's also happening to the Vietnamese and Filipino communities as well."

"I feel the American dream slipping away for our young people, who feel that home

ownership will never be attainable to them," she says. "We need to bring it back."

Similar circumstances of economic marginalization. No two ethnic groups are more closely aligned in their socio-political circumstances. Both populations suffer from being targeted by law enforcement in a pattern of structural 'ghettoized' racism.

Both populations struggle with housing affordability and are at risk of being gentrified out of the city by the growth of the tech industry. Both communities are very under-represented among the tech industry's labor force, creating an enormous disalignment of interests between the growth of the tech industry and the well-being of the Latino and Ohlone communities.

Preventing the 'ethnic cleansing' of the Muwékma Ohlone and Mexican American communities from San Jose will require the same policy solutions, creating a profound alignment of political interests, like ensuring that local law enforcement adopts anti-racist policies. Many Latino and Muwékma Ohlone residents are often treated with disrespect and suffer indignities in their own neighborhoods. Leaders in both communities have long complained of the egregious rates of the incarceration of Latino and Muwékma men.

"Ensuring that the region has an ample supply of new affordable housing units will help prevent the displacement of marginalized populations from San Jose. We must demand that the Bay Area tech giants create local workforce training programs that create pathways to job opportunities in the tech industry for local residents. Social mobility and economic integration should be important regional priorities. We just need leadership," Nijmeh wrote in a message to supporters on social media.

Despite decades of lip service and commitments of support, Lofgren openly betrayed the Muwékma Ohlone Tribe's four-decade long struggle to affirm its federal status. This, despite the fact that the Tribe donated large sums of money and volunteered heavily to get the congresswoman elected in 1994.

Similar lip service and commitments of support for the Mexican American community go largely unfulfilled, as Lofgren ignores the most pressing issues of the day. That she allows some crumbs of federal funding to fall from the table in Washington, DC, is little more than an artful distraction designed to placate the masses, critics argue.

Critics say that Lofgren's plan to make housing affordable is non-existent and that she puts her husband's financial interests ahead of the policy priorities that working families need to keep a roof over their heads. Lofgren's husband is an attorney who practices real estate law and is paid by many of the region's biggest real

Blanca Alvarado backs Nijmeh

Legendary social justice leader endorses Charlene for Congress



Blanca Alvarado, born 1931, is a social justice activist and former politician. She was the first Latina elected to the San Jose City Council and represented East San Jose until 1994. Alvarado served two terms as San Jose's first Latina Vice Mayor. In 1995, she was appointed to fill a vacant position in the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors (created by Zoe Lofgren's departure for Congress) and she was elected to the position the following year. Alvarado spent 12 years representing District 2 and retired from the Board in 2008, after 28 years in municipal politics.

She hosted her own radio program on KLOK radio and worked with Cesar Chavez to establish the Community Services Organization, the Chicano Employment Committee, and the Opportunities Industrial Center. She was president of the local

chapter of the Mexican American Political Association. In 1980, she was elected to San Jose City Council and represented East San Jose until 1994. Alvarado served two terms as San Jose's first Latina Vice Mayor. In 1995, she was appointed to fill a vacant position in the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors (created by Zoe Lofgren's departure for Congress) and she was elected to the position the following year. Alvarado spent 12 years representing District 2 and retired from the Board in 2008, after 28 years in municipal politics.

During her time in office, she fought for better representation of the Chicano community of San Jose, helped foster the arts and advocated on behalf of youth and minorities. Among many other committee assignments, she

served as chair of the Community Services Committee and as city council liaison for the city's Fine Arts Commission. She played a significant role in advocating for the Hispanic community, including improving representation on the city's decision-making bodies.

Alvarado was also active in efforts to improve Santa Clara County's juvenile detention system. She established an Office of Women's Advocacy for the county to develop programs to help women develop in their professional and personal lives. Among her many accomplishments in office were substantial investments in the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center and the construction of the Mexican Heritage Plaza, one of the largest Latino cultural centers in the country.

estate developers.

They also point to her record on incarceration reform. Lofgren has served on the House Judiciary Committee since 1994. That year, the United States had an incarcerated population of 1.25 million people. Today there are nearly 2 million people incarcerated — a 60% increase over her tenure on the Judiciary Committee. Today, she is the Chair of the Subcommittee on the Courts.

"It's 2024 and our prisons do nothing to rehabilitate people," one critic argued on social media. "We should be so much farther along as a society, but our institutions are archaic. We need younger leadership."

Under Lofgren's leadership as the top regulator of the tech industry in Congress, she has allowed a global sex trafficking epidemic to spiral. Latino and Indigenous communities are among the most victimized populations in the global sex trafficking epidemic.

Native Americans are victimized by human trafficking at rates higher than that of the gen-

eral population. Though statistics are few and far between, testimony from experts, activists, and tribal leaders — as well as independent investigations — have revealed a disproportionate impact. One study focused on four sites in the continental United States and Canada, revealed that up to 40% of sex trafficking survivors in those communities were Native American or First Nations women. Another report found that American Indian and Alaska Native women face the highest rates of rape and other sexual assaults and the second highest rates of homicide victimization. This report also accounts for the criminal justice responses to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women.

Similarly, the Latino Community, and migrants in particular, are also victimized by sex trafficking at higher rates.

That's why these communities are particularly sensitive to the issue of human trafficking — which they largely blame Lofgren for, citing her unwillingness to regulate Big Tech, which serves as her principal donor base.

Lofgren is the Ranking Member of the House Science, Technology, and Space Committee, where she functions as the Congress's top regulator of Silicon Valley. This, while her daughter serves as Google's general counsel.

Lofgren is also the second-most senior member of the House Judiciary Committee. She is the Chair of Antitrust Subcommittee, which has the power to break up monopolies and hold companies accountable for unfair commercial practices. She is also the Chair of the Subcommittee on the Internet. Under her leadership, the tech industry has gone largely unscrutinized — despite their social media products being linked to skyrocketing rates of youth bullying, depression, and suicide.

That Lofgren also Chairs the Subcommittee on Border Security, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, demonstrates a stunning depth and breadth of culpability in enabling this humanitarian catastrophe.

Critics say that Lofgren's failures have badly damaged both communities.

ownership will never be attainable to them," she says. "We need to bring it back."

Nijmeh's message — of her people's struggle against displacement from its ancient homelands — is in many ways the same struggle faced by all marginalized communities that struggle more against global capitalism than they struggle with it. In the Bay Area — where the tech industry's biggest giants dominate — that struggle and those divides are particularly visible.

San Jose's Mexican-American community identifies as being Indigenous, recognizing its Mexica (or Aztec) heritage. The community acknowledges the parallels between its experience of conquest and subjugation (being conquered first by Spain, and then again by the United States during the Mexican-American War, when California was ceded in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) as being similar to that of the Muwékma Ohlone people, who experienced conquest and subjugation through colonialism first by Spain, and then again by the United States.

Today, San Jose's Mexican American and Muwékma Ohlone communities face the sim-

BIG TECH TITANS HAVE PUT ZOE LOFGREN AT A KEY CRUX OF POWER

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The Committee is responsible for considering and reporting legislation related to a wide range of areas: antitrust, administrative, and commercial law; courts, intellectual property, and the Internet; crime, terrorism, and homeland security; immigration, citizenship, and refugees; and the constitution, civil rights, and civil liberties. The committee also conducts oversight of the Executive Branch and Judiciary.

RANKING MEMBER, TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The Committee has jurisdiction over all research and development in the areas of energy, aviation, astronautics, telecommunications, and technological innovation. This includes federal laboratories, marine research, NASA, and the commercial application of research technology.

CHAIR, ANTITRUST SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over bankruptcy and commercial law, bankruptcy judgeships, administrative law, independent counsel, state taxation affecting interstate commerce, interstate compacts, all antitrust matters.

CHAIR, BORDER SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over immigration and naturalization, border security and drug interdiction, admission of refugees, treaties, conventions and international agreements, claims against the United States, private immigration and claims bills, and non-border enforcement.

CHAIR, INTERNET SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the Administration of the U.S. Courts, the Federal Rules of Evidence, Civil and Appellate Procedure, judicial ethics, copyright, patent, trademark law, information technology, and all laws governing the Internet.

LOFGREN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BIG TECH IS CRUX OF STRATEGY TO THWART PUSH FOR REGS

Several lawmakers overseeing tech giants, such as Meta, Amazon, Google, and Apple, have children working for the companies they are supposed to regulate.

US Rep. Zoe Lofgren, a Democrat known for her strong opposition to antitrust bills aimed at reigning in Big Tech, has a daughter who works for Google. Lofgren is the Ranking Member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, while her daughter, Sheila Zoe Lofgren Collins, is a top lawyer for Google.

While Lofgren may have the highest profile of the 'Algorithm Architects' in Congress, the family circle of lawmakers and tech companies includes more than a dozen members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, who have children who work or recently worked for tech giants such as Google, Amazon, Meta (the parent company of Facebook), or Apple.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's daughter, Jessica Schumer, is a registered lobbyist at Amazon. His daughter, Allison Schumer, is a product marketing manager at Facebook.

Lofgren and Schumer decide the fate of antitrust bills targeting the tech industry.

Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen has been a member of several committees regulating the tech industry, including Banking, Appropriations, and Foreign Relations, while his daughter

is the director of global policy at Meta.

Senator Rob Portman's son worked as a People Operations Rotational Associate at Google from 2014 to 2016, while Portman helped craft and pass HR 1865, also known as SESTA-FOSTA, representing a significant reform in Congress's "techlash" against online platforms.

Portman's office claims his son had no role in lobbying or public policy during his time at Google. He did not have to lobby anyone. The dad knows where his son works. It is a form of silent lobbying.

G.K. Butterfield, a former House Energy and Commerce Committee member, criticized

Like Lofgren, these members of Congress say they are committed to balancing the power dynamics by holding Big Tech accountable. This may mean nothing more than enhanced accounting required when balancing their kids' burgeoning bank account balances.

One way to combat hypocritical lawmakers from making decisions over Big Tech while their children work for Big Tech is to require any member of Congress to recuse themselves from voting or being members of any committee that directly regulates this industry. Of course, that would mean these same Big Tech companies would not hire

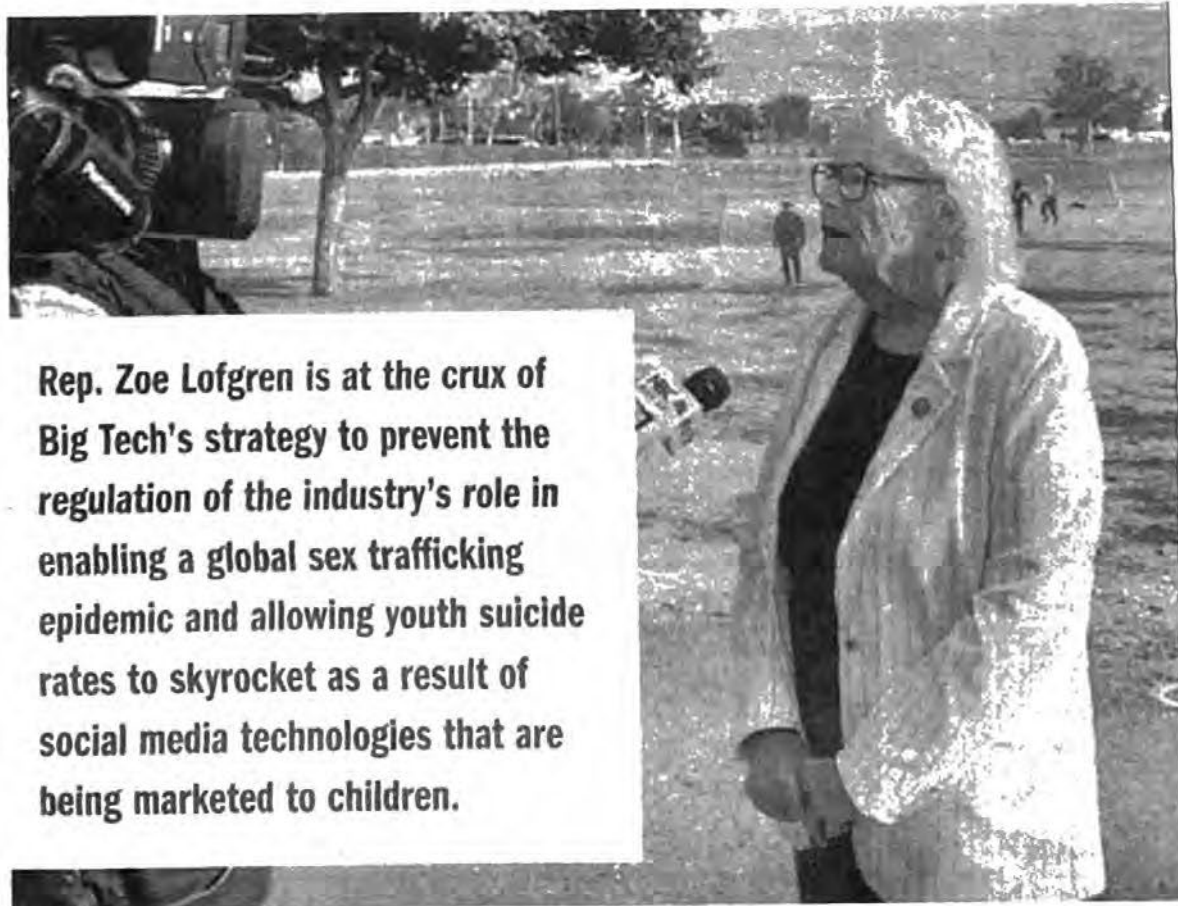
their children, and Zoe Lofgren's daughter might have to head to the unemployment line along with dozens of other kids from the privileged lawmaker's caste.

It won't happen. Instead, we hear the sanctimonious braying from the antiquated Congresswoman, who has become inordinately wealthy nearly 30 years in Congress, that her daughter's employment has absolutely nothing to do with how she votes, which somehow always aligns with Big Tech's interests.

That alone tells intelligent voters enough to know when the time has come to vote for change.

The Lofgren family's compensation package from Google has not been made public.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg for employing too many Caucasian men and advocated for Caucasian women to replace them at Facebook. Butterfield found no such Caucasian male issues at Google after his Caucasian daughter became Google's global head of inclusion from 2016 to 2020.



Rep. Zoe Lofgren is at the crux of Big Tech's strategy to prevent the regulation of the industry's role in enabling a global sex trafficking epidemic and allowing youth suicide rates to skyrocket as a result of social media technologies that are being marketed to children.

Working for Zoe Lofgren is a sweet deal for her staffers

Do you have ambitions to rise to power and make a fortune working in big tech? Just get a job as a staffer for Zoe Lofgren. According to *The American Prospect*, a publication that closely monitors the relationship between politicians and power, "Lofgren, who represents part of Silicon Valley, opposes the suite of bills challenging the dominant tech platforms. She's also taken a lot of money from those companies."

It's not only money, they say flows back and forth between Lofgren and big tech. It's also her staff. The *American Prospect* exposed the details of staffers who go directly from working with Lofgren to being hired to lofty positions in Silicon Valley.

"Several Lofgren legislative staffers have found their way into Silicon Valley companies once revolving out of government. ZJ Hull, former congressional aide and counsel, is now a senior government affair official for Apple. David Thomas, Lofgren's former chief of staff, represented the Information Technology Industry Council, whose members include Amazon, Apple, Intel, Google, and many more. Ricky Le, the former policy adviser who traveled to Google headquarters, also lobbied for ITI, before returning to the office of Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA). Erik Stallman, a former counsel, was a lobbyist for the Internet Association, another Big Tech trade group, and a public-policy counsel for Google."

Why wouldn't you want to work for Lofgren? Staffers are ensured cushy jobs and powerful positions in Silicon Valley after helping her do her dirty work. This ensures she stays closely tied to key people in big tech positions, and that the money and power Lofgren gains from having her loyal soldiers hired by these companies flows right back to her too.

"It's hard to separate Lofgren's positions from her record of support from the tech industry and its financial angels. The Center for Responsive Politics finds that Lofgren has received \$964,816 in her career, in employee and PAC contributions, from tech companies, including Cisco, Intuit, Google and its corporate parent Alphabet, Microsoft, Oracle, Adobe, the National Venture Capital Association, and leading VC company Kleiner Perkins. She's received individual donations from Kent Walker, a top Google lobbyist in Washington. A 2017 campaign fundraiser called the "Taco Truck Fiesta" was attended by Google lobbyists."

The article continues, "In 2013, Google paid to have Lofgren's then-chief of staff Stacey Leavandosky fly to Google headquarters to hold meetings on "patents, cybersecurity, copyright, innovation." Policy adviser Ricky Le also flew to Google HQ on the company's dime in the same year. Lofgren told the *Prospect* that she personally hadn't been to Google headquarters in four or five years, and hadn't visited Apple in over a decade. She couldn't remember her last trip to Facebook's campus."

Then again, why would Lofgren need to make any personal visits to Google or Facebook headquarters when she can just send the loyal people on her payroll? Especially if Lofgren's staffers know they will be handsomely rewarded by being added directly to the Google and Facebook payrolls, after ensuring their interests are mutually met.

Is the "Lofgren Loop" merely speculation on our part? Hardly. Journalists and advocates for transparency and fairness in

government have been skeptical of Lofgren's ability to serve the American people over her own greed and personal interests for decades. The writing is on the wall, and it's written in big dollar signs.

But don't just take it from us. The *American Prospect* has been warning the public about Lofgren's inextricable relationship with Big Tech for years.

"It's hard to separate Lofgren's positions from her record of support from the tech industry and its financial angels. The Center for Responsive Politics finds that Lofgren has received \$964,816 in her career, in employee and PAC contributions, from tech companies, including Cisco, Intuit, Google and its corporate parent Alphabet, Microsoft, Oracle, Adobe, the National Venture Capital Association, and leading VC company Kleiner Perkins. She's received individual donations from Kent Walker, a top Google lobbyist in Washington. A 2017 campaign fundraiser called the "Taco Truck Fiesta" was attended by Google lobbyists."

Lofgren's direct ties to big tech don't just stop at staffers. Her daughter, Sheila Zoe Lofgren Collins, serves as in-house corporate counsel at Google. Meanwhile, Lofgren is a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, which is charged with oversight of Big Tech and antitrust issues.

The New York Post exposed the potential abuses of power associated with this close familial relationship.

"That's a conflict that is stymying legislation to regulate the ever-growing behemoths in her Silicon Valley district, critics on both sides of the aisle say. Lofgren is senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, which is charged with oversight of Big Tech and antitrust issues. Meanwhile, her daughter Sheila Zoe Lofgren Collins, serves as in-house corporate counsel at Google."

The Post also details the outright intimidation tactics that power-hungry Lofgren deploys, openly intimidating any other Democrat candidate hopefuls with less personal ties to Silicon Valley from infringing on her turf.

"She has a lot of power in slowing down and even blocking bills," a person with direct knowledge of the situation told *On The Money*. "She's on a war path for the last four months — she's even spoken openly about her ability to fundraise, and is intimidating Democrats about how important tech is for fundraising."

All this criticism and exposure hasn't stopped Lofgren so far, even among calls for her to recuse herself from such positions of power.

Jeff Hauser, founder and director of the Revolving Door Project, a progressive group that examines money in politics, calls Lofgren's familial ties to Silicon Valley "problematic." "It's definitely a conflict of interest and if I were Lofgren, I'd want to address the concerns by recusing myself — not taking a leadership role."

VOTES RAISE DEEP QUESTIONS FOR LOFGREN



International humanitarian organizations, poverty law centers, and good government groups have long called on Congress to curb the use of social media and telecom technologies in the context of the global human trafficking epidemic — including the global sex trade. But those calls have fallen on deaf ears in Congress, where members enjoy the easy patronage and the largess of Big Tech lobbyists. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, who has represented the Silicon Valley region of California since 1995, and serves as Ranking Member of the Science, Technology, and Space Committee, is Big Tech's top operative in the Congress.

To younger, more junior members of Congress, Lofgren acts as a gatekeeper to Silicon Valley's lucrative tech ecosystem, and she isn't generous with her contacts unless the junior member submits ceremoniously.

But Zoe Lofgren isn't merely the Ranking Member of the powerful committee governing technology in the United States — she is also the second most senior member of the all powerful House Judiciary Committee, undoubtedly one of the most coveted perches for any Washington political boss.

In fact, she currently, or in the recent past, has served as the Chairperson of key subcommittees, including those governing immigration, border security, refugees, and citizenship; the Internet, the courts, and anti-trust enforcement. The implications of Lofgren's influence over the House's interest in anti-trust enforcement cannot be overstated.

That she is Congress's top regulator of the Internet and the person most responsible for border security makes her starkly culpable for a global sex trafficking epidemic that is enabled by Congress's failure to fulfill its oversight role on both fronts.

Google donates nearly \$90,000 p/year to Lofgren. The company is a top contributor. Cisco donates more than \$80,000 p/year. Apple donates nearly \$40,000 p/year, while Meta donates just under \$30,000 p/year. The electronics manufacturing industry and the Internet industry were her top sources of campaign funds. Large individual contributions make up more than 57% of her total campaign contributions, while PAC contributions make up 27%, and small individual contributions make up barely 4%.

Lofgren took more than \$167,625 from Big Tech last year, making her the third highest-individual receiver of campaign funds from the Internet industry. But that figure alone seriously understates how much she benefits from Big Tech's kindness. As chair of the California congressional delegation, Lofgren play what she calls a "make or break" role in key house



The Big Tech companies make a substantial portion of their advertising revenues targeting children, and they don't want to be regulated.

racers in California and elsewhere. Big Tech wields its resources at her direction, to the tune of tens of millions of dollars each year, in a myriad of campaign finance vehicles.

In exchange for those election-time resources, Lofgren has earned her reputation as the Puppet of Big Tech by repeatedly voting against regulating technology, internet, and telecom companies at the expense of consumers, children, and the American people.

It's common for Lofgren to vote to reverse administrative rules on behalf of her sponsors, like when she voted to reverse a Federal Communications Commission rule designed to protect the privacy of customers of broadband and other telecommunications services.

In many ways, Lofgren is the reason that Americans pay the highest prices for cable and internet in the world. She has repeatedly voted against measures that would promote competition among telecom and fiber optics companies, like when she voted against the Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act.

Perhaps most concerning is Lofgren's vote against the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (22717).

Lofgren's daughter — Sheila Collins — is the General Counsel at Google, raising questions about conflicts of interest and kickback schemes similar to Hunter Biden's pay-for-access racket. Lofgren's daughter has refused to publicly disclose the full range of her compensation, benefits, and perks that she receives from Google and other Big Tech industry sources that her mother regulates as Ranking Member of the House Science and Technology Committee.

Many good government watchdogs want Sheila Collins' compensation agreements to be investigated for public corruption. They assert that the matter should be referred to the House Ethics Committee, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Inspector General. Unfortunately, in her role as Chair of the House Administration Subcommittee, Rep. Lofgren would decide her own punishment if she were eventually found to have violated ethics rules.

Raising eyebrows even further is a peculiar vote that Lofgren took in 2011. Despite being on the floor of the House at the time, Lofgren refused to vote for the Protecting Children from Internet Pornographers Act. That law passed overwhelmingly, and even received the support of Nancy Pelosi, but Lofgren couldn't bring herself to vote in favor of it.

BURDENED WITH SKY-HIGH RENT LATINOS COULD SEND LOFGREN

The incumbent, long-time politician, feather-nester, and partisan above-all Democrat, Susan Ellen "Zoe" Lofgren, is expected to face off against Republican businessman Peter Hernandez and Democrat Charlene C. Nijmeh, the Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone, an indigenous Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area.

According to a Gallup poll from October, only 13% of U.S. adults approved the job Congress was doing. Similarly, a November poll by Statista put the approval rate at 15%. However, according to Ballotpedia, more than 95% of congressional incumbents won their races in 2022. This paradoxical trend demonstrates that while Americans have a negative view of Congress, they re-elect their representatives.

The phenomenon is widely known as the 'incumbency advantage.' This advantage arises from the familiarity and trust that low-information voters associate a familiar name with competence, without regard to the candidates' positions on issues that affect them.

An emblematic case of this is Lofgren. She has self-served in Congress for 28 years, consistently securing her seat despite her long tenure and alignment with big-money donors. Her political career began with her election in 1994, and she has managed to secure her position 14 times since then, facing her 18th campaign in 2024.

Lofgren's success in getting re-elected despite her lopsided favoritism of Big Tech and big donors illuminates the power of incumbency in American politics.

Her relationships with wealthy donors symbolize the issues plaguing Congress' low ratings.

The tide may be turning. Incumbency may no longer be the advantage it once was. But Lofgren is leveraging her established network and sizable campaign finances to maintain her seat. She is a great favorite of Apple, Google, Amazon, and Facebook - and her role on Congress is to protect them from competitors, handing over America's future in so many areas - including information, retail sales, innovation, and speech to the Big Four.

Lofgren has amassed a significant campaign fund courtesy of Big Tech. And she sits on the two committees most likely to help Big Tech - the Judiciary, and Science, Space, and Technology.

Critics argue that her votes for, and more importantly her opposition to bills (often smothering them in committee),

which might reign in Big Tech, is what they pay for.

Lofgren's district, which includes parts of Santa Clara County and Silicon Valley, has been a Democratic stronghold for years. However, the 2020 Census significantly altered the South Bay and Central Coast Congressional Districts. As a result, the California Citizens Redistricting Commission created the new 18th Congressional District. This district combines parts of Santa Clara County with portions of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, and all of San Benito County.

It shifted her safe Silicon Valley, Tech-dominated district to one now 65 percent Latino (mostly Mexican).

Why would she embrace all new voters, unfamiliar with her name, and who, if they knew her policies, would not want her as their representative?

Did the top party leaders in the Democratic Party outflank her? Did they hand her a district she did not want and had to accept?

Not at all. She is a top party leader. She wants the change.

According to Lofgren's website, "Zoe sees great opportunities in representing this newly-redrawn district, specifically in connecting the Silicon Valley-based technology prowess with the area's robust agricultural sector."

The redrawing of California's 18th Congressional District will secure her political and financial future.

The redistricting, carried out by the so-called "non-partisan" California Citizens Redistricting Commission, using the 2020 Census altered the district's boundaries.

Lofgren uses the census as an opportunity to bridge the gap between Silicon Valley's technological might and the region's thriving agricultural sector. This will pave the way for Big Tech's expansion toward rural areas, opening up lucrative real estate opportunities for Lofgren's donors and her attorney husband's clients.

The newly redrawn district now includes the Salinas Valley, known for its substantial Latino population. The sudden inclusion of a predominantly Lat-



The primary for California's 18th district will be on March 5th, though ballot boxes open on February 6th.



The CEOs of Google, Apple, and Meta are known to frequently call Rep. Zoe Lofgren privately on all sorts of matters. They have made it clear that the Bay Area's housing shortage is a principal constraint on the tech giants' long-term growth. Google, like other tech giants, require ample supplies of luxury housing to attract highly paid software engineers and heady tech workers.



REP. ZOE LOFGREN ASKS GOOGLE CEO SUNDAR PICHAI HOW GOOGLING 'IDIOT' SHOWS A PICTURE OF PRESIDENT TRUMP

INTS, N PACKING



no community raises questions about displacement and gentrification.

Her friends covet the land. And land came before Big Tech. And land goes to the highest bidder.

The outcome of the 2024 election will depend on whether gullible Latino voters are lulled into believing Lofgren - with almost three decades of serving Big Tech - will be no threat to their established interests and land.

For Lofgren, the best result is for Latinos to doze comfortably under their sombreros in comfort and complacency, and choose not to vote in the primary. Take a siesta, amigos.

Latinos in the district may not have to worry. If the Latinos can vote for Lofgren one time, she can put enough policies in place to pave the way for the displacement of the old Latino population and gentrify the area for something fresh and new, and more reliable to her and her friend's needs.

The needs of Big Tech are voracious. Big Tech's future bedroom communities lead straight through Salinas Valley.

And while Latinos may disapprove of the job Congress is doing, Zoe Lofgren hopes they will vote for the incumbent.

We often give our ene-

mies the means for our destruction. Latinos make way for Big Tech and vote for Zoe Lofgren.

The eagle was struck by an arrow fletched with feathers from its own kind.

In other news, Google is planning to construct a massive new corporate headquarters in downtown San Jose. Real estate developers expect it to accelerate the City's displacement of Mexican Americans, Filipinos, and the Vietnamese communities.

Lofgren's crusade for abortion on demand, transgender agenda rile socially conservative Latino voters in new district

The relentless social crusade for abortion and transgender rights that made Zoe Lofgren a liberal hero to her white, wealthy, elite constituents might just be her undoing in a new more conservative, family-oriented district. The people she must now ingratiate herself to are a very different type of Democrat than Lofgren has previously been assured to appease with her far left stances on abortion and LGBTQ issues. District 18 is less white, less rich, less liberal, and much more of a diverse Latino and working-class population than she's ever faced before. Will her new community be convinced that Lofgren shares their values in such contentious social issues?

Let's take a closer look at some key examples of Lofgren's dogged determination to push abortion and a pro-transgender agenda, and examine why this new voting bloc might take pause. Lofgren has made her

way."

Her impassioned statement let her formerly very liberal voters know she believes "Freedom is on the line. We need to step up, get busy, and organize to stop Republican plans to impose their right-wing agenda on the entire country."

But does the demography of her new district see abortion as a right-wing agenda? The statistics say otherwise.

According to the Pew Research Center's report in 2022, "Among Latino Democrats and Democratic leaners, 84% of liberals say abortion should be legal in most or all cases. Meanwhile, among Latino Republicans and GOP leaners, 69% of conservatives say abortion should be illegal in most or all cases."

While many Latinos have voted for Democrats, they don't necessarily identify as "liberals" or with the increasingly

Lofgren cut Heriot's testimony off, using her booming microphone to blast her.

"I think you're a bigot, lady. I think you're an ignorant bigot."

Lofgren then continued to lecture Heriot. "I've got to say, I found [this testimony] rather offensive, and it says to me that the witness really doesn't know anything and probably has never met a transgender child who is going through, in almost every case, a very difficult experience finding themselves."

While Lofgren's outrage was applauded by liberals, this was not the case among more conservative-minded people who considered her attack on Heriot, an accomplished law professor and civil rights attorney, to be rude, uncalled for and out of touch with the views of many Americans.

According to Vox, "While most Latinos ranked the economy as a top midterm priority, their opinions on abortion and LGBTQ Americans were much more varied. Vox's reporting ultimately concluded that currently 'Fewer than half of Latinos say that same-sex marriage and acceptance of transgender people are 'good for society'."

Support for LGBTQ and trans rights is also much less popular when it comes to older generations of Latinos and working-class Latino families, compared to the young Latinos of Generation X. A big chunk of Lofgren's new voters are working-class families, who might not appreciate Lofgren pushing pro-transgender values that they largely believe are not good for society.

Will Lofgren's allegiance to far-left liberal values put her at odds with her new unfamiliar territory?

On the March 5 primary, we will see what the voters of District 18 truly stand for.

Fact: Lofgren voted against a House resolution expressing the sense of Congress condemning recent attacks on pro-life facilities, groups, and churches (Jan 11, 2023)

Lofgren believes in abortion without limits - including allowing a mother to kill a baby after it has been born alive. She voted against the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (Nov 11, 2023) and dozens of other measures to protect unborn children.

staunch support of abortion rights well known. Condemning the Supreme Court's Dobbs Decision, she opined, "This Supreme Court decision is the first ever to take a constitutional right away from Americans. This is a bleak day for our country," said Lofgren.

"The Court has become a partisan body, overthrowing decades of precedent to advance a right-wing political agenda. This decision is the culmination of decades of efforts by the Republican Party to place one far-right ideologue after another on the Court."

She promised to protect abortion in California via her power in the U.S. Congress, saying, "I'm grateful that our local elected officials strongly support women's rights and will continue to fight for them. I join them in that crucial fight. At least until next year, abortion will remain safe, accessible, and legal in California. But we must take action to keep it that

left-leaning liberal politics of the Democratic Party, especially when it comes to abortion rights.

Lofgren has a fundamental difference in values from her new Latino constituents in her pro-transgender agenda. Lofgren has been a fierce supporter of transgender rights and gender affirming care, which was pleasing to the wealthy liberal elites of her previous district. It was so pleasing to this crowd that they applauded her verbal attack on a member of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Gail Heriot, for being an "ignorant bigot" when Heriot testified before the House of Representatives. During her testimony, Heriot expressed opposition to the Obama administration's directive on transgender students' use of restrooms, which urges public school districts nationwide to allow transgender students to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity.

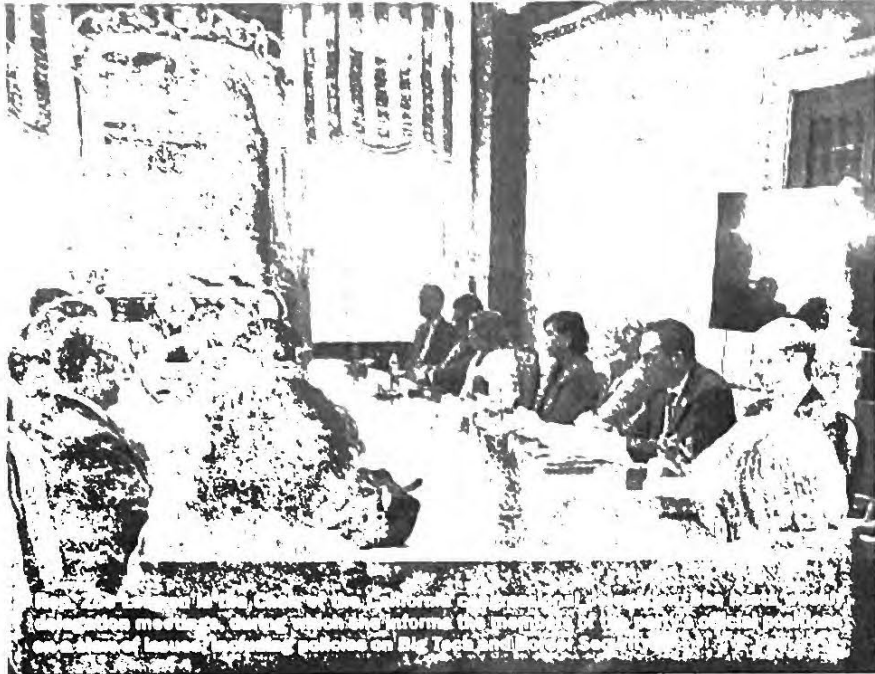
VISION

Integrated Downtown West



LOFGREN HAS PRIORITIZED PARTISAN POLITICS OVER THE LATINO COMMUNITY

Lofgren is disconnected from the district, spending most of her time and life in Washington, DC. Outside of the election cycle, she is rarely seen in the district.



Rep. Zoe Lofgren has been in elected office for more than 44 years, having served on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for fourteen years, before serving in Congress for nearly 30 years. She represents a majority-Latino district, a community that feels as though they deserve representation that prioritizes their interests above partisanship and political games.

Rep. Lofgren is a leftist firebrand – a member of the Bay Area squad led by Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi that aged quickly into the party establishment, with the monied backing of Big Tech. She is widely known as one of Pe-

nology Committee, and the second most senior member of the all-powerful Judiciary Committee.

As such, Lofgren naturally prioritizes Pelosi's partisan political games over the working class Mexican American constituency that has been in San Jose since before California was in the United States.

Despite serving as the Chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, Citizenship, and Refugees, she has failed to address the humanitarian and national security crisis on the southern border.

Lofgren had the opportunity to work with five different presidents to secure the border and fix the broken immigration system. Instead, she has prioritized far-left politics and refused to work across the party aisle every time that there was an opening to do so. Lofgren's politicking on the border crisis has, in many ways, created the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that we face today.

Lofgren voted against the Border Security Bill of 2006. Lofgren voted against the Secure Fence Act of 2008. Lofgren voted against the Immigration Act of 2008, which was a bipartisan comprehensive immigration re-

form plan being advanced by President George W. Bush. Lofgren voted against the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act of 2018.

Lofgren has been no friend to immigrants – even voting against humanitarian assistance for migrants at the border. Lofgren voted against emergency appropriations to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants at the southern border, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act of 2019 (8/25/19). Lofgren voted against the Undocumented Immigrant Emergency Medical Assistance legislation being considered in 2004.

Lofgren twice voted against Immigration Reform legislation that was being considered in 1996.

In recent weeks, young activists and leaders in San Jose's historic Latino neighborhoods have been rising up to mobilize against Zoe Lofgren to oust her at the ballot box. The activists are deeply concerned about Lofgren's relentless support of Big Tech, which has translated into a relentless gentrification of the city's most marginalized populations.

Watsonville Mayor Rebecca Garcia tells voters to back Charlene Concepción Nijmeh



Before Rebecca Garcia served as Mayor of Watsonville, CA, she served as a City Councilmember, as a Trustee on Cabrillo College's governing board for 20 years. She chaired the Watsonville Housing Task Force in the early 1990's, leading to an inclusionary housing ordinance, accommodating affordable housing development. Now, she is rallying the community around the congressional candidacy of Charlene Concepción Nijmeh.

Watsonville Mayor Rebecca Garcia has endorsed the candidacy of Tribal Chairwoman Charlene Concepción Nijmeh for Congress, in her bid to unseat the entrenched long time incumbent, Rep. Zoe Lofgren.

Garcia's endorsement comes as Nijmeh has been surging in internal campaign polling and Lofgren has faced a barrage of scrutiny over her poor performance on issues that are important to voters in the district, particularly regarding the housing

affordability crisis, homelessness, and Lofgren's refusal to regulate Big Tech platforms for their role in the human trafficking epidemic.

"The voice of the people is being heard by Charlene. She is ready to address these issues in Congress," Mayor Garcia says.

The Latino vote in the 18th congressional district's small cities – like Watsonville, Hollister, Gilroy, Soledad, and King City – are likely to decide the race. Sal-

Tuan Nguyen, Chairman of the Asian American National Committee endorses Nijmeh's bid for Congress

Tuan Nguyen, the influential Chairman of the Asian American National Committee has endorsed the congressional candidacy of Charlene Concepción Nijmeh.

Nguyen, who is a Vietnamese American based in Orange County, where a vibrant Vietnamese community is finally finding its footing in American politics in the 45th congressional district. In that district, Michelle Steel is being challenged by Derek Tran.

Nguyen has long wanted to see San Jose's Vietnamese community organize to assert its political influence. In fact, San Jose

has the largest concentration of Vietnamese people in the United States, which is not widely known.

"I have personally known and been a friend of Charlene for many years. Chairwoman Nijmeh is a dedicated, passionate, and principled leader, leading worthy causes in defending justice and equality in the best ways that she can," Nguyen writes. "She is a true and honest leader who we can count on in these challenging times. I ask all Californians to join me in supporting Chairwoman Nijmeh's candidacy for Congress in California's 18th district."



Rep. Zoe Lofgren is the Chair of the California congressional delegation.

losi's top 'enforcers', earning her powerful positions as Ranking Member of the Science and Tech-



Morgan Hill Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram



National Human Trafficking and Slavery Prevention Month

The month of January has been designated by the White House as National Human Trafficking and Slavery Prevention Month. Millions of women, men and children around the world are subjected to forced labor, domestic servitude, or the sex trade at the hands of human traffickers. A form of modern-day slavery, the inhumane practice of human trafficking takes place here in the United States as well.

Human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes investigated by ICE. In its worst manifestation, human trafficking is akin to modern-day slavery. They are forced into prostitution, involuntary labor and other forms of servitude to repay debts - often incurred during entry into the United States.

ICE recognizes that severe consequences of human trafficking continue even after the perpetrators have been arrested and held accountable. ICE's Victim Assistance Program helps coordinate services to help human trafficking victims, such as crisis intervention, counseling and emotional support.

The average age a teen enters the sex trade in the US is 12 to 14 years old. Many victims are runaway girls who were sexually abused as children. In 2018, The National Human Trafficking Hotline received more calls from California than any other state in the US, followed by Texas and Florida, respectively.

There are an estimated 50 million people trapped in slavery around the world.

Children account for half of the victims of human trafficking. The average age that a young person becomes involved in sex trafficking is 12 years old. If the victim is a minor, no force, fraud, or coercion is necessary to prove trafficking. Any youth under the age of 18 who is involved in a commercial sex act is considered to be a victim of trafficking.

Sex traffickers prey on vulnerable people, especially young people, and often lure them with promises of protection, love, or adventure. They often contact potential victims through social media or approach them at clubs

and bars, at school, in malls, or in metro stations.

Labor trafficking includes situations of debt bondage, forced labor, and involuntary child labor. Common types of labor trafficking include people forced to work in homes as domestic servants and factory workers held in inhumane conditions with little to no pay.

Victims of human trafficking are often afraid to come forward and unable to leave traffickers because of trauma, physical violence, fear of harm to their families, having nowhere else to go, or a distrust of authority figures.

As both a grave crime and a human rights abuse, it compromises national and economic security, undermines the rule of law, and harms the well-being of individuals and communities everywhere. It is a crime of exploitation. Traffickers profit at the expense of their victims by compelling them to perform labor or to engage in commercial sex in every region of the United States and around the world. Human traffickers prey on people of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities, exploiting them for their own profit.

Traffickers compel victims to engage in commercial sex and to work in both legal and illicit industries and sectors, including hospitality, traveling sales crews, agriculture, janitorial services, construction, landscaping, restaurants, factories, care for persons with disabilities, salon services, massage parlors, retail services, fairs and carnivals, peddling and begging, drug smuggling and distribution, religious institutions, child care, and domestic work.

Laura Mullen's story of surviving trafficking inspires her work to help others

BY LAURA MULLEN

I was on the streets for six years. I was trafficked by multiple people who took advantage of a drug addiction I had developed. They would intentionally make me sick and use drugs to torture me until I did what they wanted. Once, I was forced to perform sex acts with multiple members of MS-13 while they threatened me with an axe and knife. Even after that, I did not even consider calling the police.

Now, I work with other victims and know that there are law enforcement agencies and officers who are committed to protecting victims and survivors of human trafficking. But back then, the police had never done anything to earn my trust or respect. One told me "You are not a productive member of society." Even if they could have helped, cops had always made me feel bad about myself. To me, I was living in my worst nightmare but even then, the cops were the boogymen. They harassed me and followed me around because of things that they thought my family members had done.

While in jail on a drug-related charge, the police hounded me to report my trafficker. They had recognized me from my time on the streets and were trying to prosecute my trafficker. At that moment, I refused to help them. I told them I had no idea what they were talking about. Because at that moment, my trafficker was in jail with me. He had other girls who could harm me. I was convinced and afraid that if I talked, someone would hurt me or worse. I felt so trapped; the police wanted to get me and my trafficker wanted to get me.

Someone from Empowerment Collaborative of Long Island came to see me while I was in jail. They showed me that I didn't have to go back to the streets, that I had other options and that I had

hope. I went through their program when I got out of jail, got an apartment with their help, and began trauma therapy.

I think back to the kind of state I was in then. If someone had said, you have to provide information to the police if you want to get help, I would have never gotten help. I would have continued trying to make it on my own, because the risk of my trafficker hurting me or getting someone to find me was just too high. The police had never protected me before, how could I trust that I would be safe if I reported my situation to them? In the moment you reach out for help, you're thinking about how you're going to eat, how you're going to get shoes to wear. If someone says that everything will be reported to the police, then you've got to think about, "Oh man, what if the police try to find me, to talk to me?" That's just too much to think about when you're trying to survive.

I now work for Empowerment Collaborative of Long Island as the Survivor Advisory Board Co-Founder and President. I work closely with law enforcement now and we have 34 partner agencies, including HSI, local trafficking unit, and ICE. I am on-call 24/7. If there's going to be a raid at a worksite or hotel, they call me and I show up with them. I talk to anyone I meet and explain what resources are available. When I was on the streets, I felt so alone and so now I try to make sure no one feels that way.

Many of my clients have the same concerns I did. For those who are undocumented, their fear of the police is even greater. Once, HSI was called down to a hotel where the hotel owners were taking bribes from traffickers. One woman I talked to there refused all help from the police, even food. She told me that she had escaped gang violence in El Salvador and even though her situation here was bad, she would never go back

to El Salvador. Another woman I worked with came from Honduras. Her trafficker had promised her a place to live and a good life. Instead, she got endless domestic work and fear. Her trafficker told her that if she ever left his house, he would call the police and she would immediately be deported back to Honduras. She did not step foot out of the property for two and a half years.

Though we may not agree on how victims and survivors often see law enforcement, that is the reality they live in. There is so much fear and confusion. Fear of deportation, fear of retaliation, fear for the safety of ourselves and our families. Very few people understand their rights.

Now, when I work with victims and survivors, my only goal is to get resources to help that person. I tell them, "You have a choice." You can choose how you want to go about your healing and you can choose the help you want. I am here to support you. You decide if and when you are ready to report your situation.

I've helped to train 5,000 community members. I've spoken at international symposiums, been featured in newspapers, all because I want to educate our community. I want to empower people to know what kind of help is available to them, so that they can make good decisions. Right now, I am advocating for the immunity bill in New York State that would make sure people will not be charged with prostitution if they are victims/witnesses of a crime. I am also working to make this federal law.

Laura Mullen serves on the Survivor Advisory Board, and is its Co-Founder and President.

If you or someone you know is in need of help, scan this QR code:



For James Evans, self-realization was key to surviving trafficking experience

BY JAMES EVANS

Growing up in a small, Midwestern town was not easy for a child like me. From a very young age, I knew I was different. I also knew that being different - being gay - in my hometown was not acceptable. My solution was to hide my authentic self and try to become the person that others wanted me to be, hoping eventually that the new "persona" would eventually snuff out the part of me that I was unwilling to accept.

I was living in a dorm room at a college that I had gotten into after passing the GED exam. I was only there because I needed a place to sleep. I was on academic probation and I knew my days there were numbered. The man told me I had other options. He would teach me how to do massage therapy and I could live the glamorous and exciting life he offered. He promised the money would be great - especially because I was so "good looking." I didn't need an education. I could simply pack a bag and travel with him. Hopeless, I felt I had no other choice. I said yes.

He paid for my train ticket and I met him in Chicago. When I arrived, there were other men there who also traveled with him. They were not massage therapists. They were escorts. I was told that I could do massage - but I could make much more money if I had sex with the clients. The money that we made would then be pooled together to pay for the flights, advertisements and hotel accommodations. If there was any money left after that, I was told I would get a cut. I could make more if I helped recruit guys for the nightly live webcam shows. Every couple of days, we would book a hotel in another part of the country. Before we got on the plane, we would book a full day of escort clients in that new city.

I thought I was in control. I thought I was making these decisions. I thought this man wanted what was best for me and wanted to help me. It never crossed my mind that I was being used as bait, having unprotected sex with countless men for HIS profit.

Although hundreds and hundreds of dollars were handed over to this man in a given day, I

was only given enough money to buy food. After one of the other guys introduced me to crystal meth, I became consumed. It was the only thing that could get me through this. I became a shell - detached from all emotion. I no longer had any respect for my body. My body was no longer my own. A piece of it belonged to every single man who violated it.

Eventually, I had a psychotic break. I became a liability and the men had the key cards to the hotel room changed. They skipped town and I became homeless in California - 3,000 miles away from home. I was used up and thrown away like a piece of trash from a fast food restaurant. That is exactly how I viewed myself - as a piece of trash.

I didn't blame the men who left me there. I blamed myself. For years, I tortured myself. I replayed these events over and over and over in my mind. Like a prisoner being forced to watch his nightmares on a loop. Every day was the same. Even though time moved forward, I was still living each day in the past. I was stuck and unable to move forward.

Then something miraculous happened. In the depths of my despair, a stranger found me broken, beaten down and afraid, on the streets and took me to the hospital. I was given IV fluids, some food and an opportunity to go to drug and alcohol rehabilitation. I agreed to go because I needed a place to sleep and food to eat. I was sick and tired of eating leftover food from trash cans on the street. I was too tired to fight life anymore.

This was the beginning of the road to my recovery. Still tortured by the trauma of my past, I wrestled drugs and alcohol for many more years. I truly believed that no one else had experienced what I had experienced. I did not think that anyone could understand and that I would have to live with the pain for the rest of my life. I had isolated myself and was afraid of everyone. I did not trust anyone because I knew everyone wanted something from me. Then, in late 2017, I stumbled upon the Polaris Project.

When I read through the survivor testimonials, I heard my story. I realized I was not alone.

There was a name for what I had experienced. I had experienced sex trafficking. For so long I had denied this truth because it didn't fit the narrative that I had been told about sex trafficking. When I read the stories and identified with the other survivors, I found acceptance and was willing to find a solution. I was tired of feeling helpless and stuck, so I took action. I picked up the phone and I called the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

I no longer live in my trauma. I choose to live in my strength. I have recently celebrated three years of sobriety. I am so proud of my recovery and my desire to LIVE. I went back to school and became a certified massage therapist. I cried when I got my Massage Therapist Certificate in the mail because a pamphlet for the National Human Trafficking Hotline fell out of the envelope when I opened it. I realized things had gone full circle and that I had made something beautiful out of my past.

TRIBAL CHAIRWOMAN'S LIFE STORY INSPIRES NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Charlene Nijmeh has served as Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe for the last five years, reinvigorating the Tribe's 40-plus year struggle to affirm its federal status. The Tribe was previously federally recognized and was never terminated by an Act of Congress. One hundred percent of its members descend from that previously recognized Tribe.

Charlene Nijmeh has served as Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe for the last five years, reinvigorating the Tribe's 40-plus year struggle to affirm its federal status. The Tribe was previously federally recognized and was never terminated by an Act of Congress. One hundred percent of its members descend from that previously recognized Tribe.

A seven-year Stanford University genomic study has conclusively linked the Tribe's ten core lineages to a 2,000-year-old burial ground on their homelands. And just last year, a federal District Court judge in the Northern District of California found that the Tribe retains its sovereign immunity despite not being on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' official list of recognized Tribes.

The Bay Area community has been firmly supportive. Five Democratic Party county committees have passed resolutions endorsing the Tribe's efforts. The region's largest universities, environmental groups, and minority political blocs have endorsed the Tribe's recognition as well.

Card rooms operating in the Bay Area and Tribal gaming entities in Northern California have been bankrolling lobbyists to undermine Muwekma, as they've been doing for decades - which has created a big political roadblock that is slowly being disassembled.

To overcome the politics of division and greed that has divided Indian Country, Chairwoman Nijmeh is challenging 30-year incumbent congresswoman and Chair of the California delegation, Rep. Zoe Lofgren. Lofgren wields the gaming tribe's political largess to campaigns around the country, and has been the primary obstacle to legislation that would affirm the Tribe.

Q: Where did you get the inspiration to run for Congress?

At the age of eight, I saw my mom hit an archeologist with a shovel as he was digging up a sacred burial site of our ancestors. It was an important moment of resistance for our Tribe. It was a breaking point. So much had been taken from us, our community had enough. We stood up and said, "not one more

inch". But my mom went to jail, went bankrupt, and lost her house because of it.

I learned that the winner of the war writes the history books - and the history that's been taught in schools has not been truthful. As indigenous people, we need to teach our own history - not allow colonial institutions to propagate false narratives about us, like the racist trope that we were savage barbarians. For too many decades, the American government has tried in vain to justify or reason away the genocide that they waged against us - but there is no justification for what the federal government and the State of California have done to us.

People don't understand, because they haven't been told the truth.

Over the last five years that I've been serving as Chairwoman, I've learned how legacy media companies ignore indigenous people and the challenges that we face. The San Francisco Chronicle refuses to tell our story, and sometimes even actively undermines our justice campaign.

That's why I see the need for this Trail of Truth - my campaign for Congress - to raise awareness and to educate the public about the ongoing contemporary colonial realities that continue to victimize my people, and victimize indigenous people across North America.

My goal is nothing short of our political liberation - not just for my Ohlone people, but political liberation for indigenous people across Turtle Island. We are so much stronger when we organize and mobilize together. For too long, we've allowed the federal government's divide and conquer tactics in our community to undermine our collective political power - which is enormous.

When you became Chairwoman five years ago, what did you predict would be the most difficult challenge in the role? Were your predictions correct?

I've always known that federal recognition would be our biggest challenge. I saw my mom serve as Chairwoman for 40 years, trying to get the Bureau of Indian Affairs to correct its mistake - it's egregious negligence - in not including our Tribe on the list of federally



recognized Tribes that it first created in 1978. We've been in that struggle ever since.

When I was asked by my mother to take over the role, it wasn't something I was looking forward to, because I saw the obstacles that she faced. It was daunting. I've seen how the special interests use money to influence politics and mobilize lobbyists against us. I've seen what the card rooms did to try to stop us at every turn.

However, the challenge that is becoming more and more pressing for our Tribe is the existential threat posed by gentrification. The enormous affordability crisis in the Bay Area is pushing our young people from our 10,000-year-old homeland. That's why - in addition to our reinvigorated campaign for federal recognition - my administration is making it a priority to acquire land and to build housing for our people. We aren't going to let the issue of federal recognition slow down our efforts to rebuild our village.

Recently, a few major developments have happened in the Tribe's favor. Stanford University's genomic study was published, conclusively linking the Tribe's core lineages to an ancient burial site in Sunol, CA. Separately, a federal judge in the Northern District

DRY MMUNITY



Textile recycling enterprise provides affordable clothing in Latin America

Just over fifteen years ago, Charlene Nijmeh founded a recycling company that today diverts 60 million pounds of waste from landfills each year. Her companies and partners then resell what can be reused through their 123 stores in Central America. Whatever can't be resold is reprocessed into fiber and used to make building insulation and carpet underlay.

Charlene has been a thought leader in the recycling space. She was 15 years ahead of the curve, as progressive states like California are just now considering textile recycling laws to address the enormous environmental impacts of the textile industry – which is the most environmentally damaging in the world.

Her investment in Megapaca allowed the chain of second-hand retail stores to grow from just under a dozen stores to more than 123 supercenters today. In the process, she created 8,000 jobs in Central America and several hundred in the United States.

After her company became successful, Charlene created the Green Education Foundation to support youth education programs focused on teaching the next generation the importance of recycling and environmental sustainability.

Charlene pioneered the design of industry-leading neighborhood donation stations, which have made the economics of recycling viable at scale. The sta-

tions have cameras that allow for remote monitoring, which is powered by solar panels.

Charlene's partnership with Megapaca has created 8,000 jobs in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Charlene's partnership in Ukraine created more than 100 jobs, before Russia's unprovoked war forced the company to shut down its textile warehouse.

Charlene's partnerships in Turkey have been growing rapidly. The country has a robust textile industry that supplies European markets, and her recycling companies purchase overruns and overstocks for distribution in Latin American markets.

Following devastating earthquakes in Turkey last year, where one business partner lost dozens of relatives, Charlene traveled to the hardest-hit regions to deliver badly needed relief supplies, including clothing, food, and supplies on behalf of her Green Education Foundation and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.



of California affirmed that the Tribe retains sovereign immunity, despite not being on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' official list. What does it feel like for all of this evidence mounting and the entire community now accepting that you are precisely the people that you've always said you are?

My people have always known who we are – each generation instilled in us our obligations to our land, to our ancestors, to our children, and to each other. It feels good that the broader Bay Area community is finally recognizing the enormous body of evidence that proves that we are precisely the people who we've always said we are. It's unfortunate that our leaders in Congress are moving slowly on this, but having the community's support is really beautiful and inspiring.

The Judge's decision in the Weiss case wasn't a surprise to us. Our sovereignty is inherent. It doesn't come from the federal government. I'm glad that the judge affirmed our sovereign immunity. It puts us in a very unique situation among Tribes in the United States.

Indians – particularly California Indians – struggle with a lot of issues around landlessness, homelessness, and economic

struggles, in addition to the very pressing challenge of cultural survival. When your Tribe ultimately does get your federal status clarified, what will the Tribe do next? There are so many other challenges, where do you start?

Housing is the most pressing. We're going to rebuild our village and rekindle our fire. That's going to protect our young people from gentrification pressures. We need to acquire land for that, because California was stolen from us.

We want to revive our Chochenyo language, to reinvigorate our ceremonies and dances, and to support our artists so that we can usher in a new golden age of cultural revival for our people. We're considering strategies to open a charter school.

Our people have endured an enormous amount of trauma, and there is a lot of intergenerational healing that we need to work on internally as a community. There are drug treatment needs, and our faith keepers want to be involved in that healing work. There are job training needs. There's a need for economic opportunities for those who are trained.

Senator Newman's bill addresses textile recycling

Charlene Nijmeh is working with Senator Josh Newman's office on SB707 - The Responsible Textile Recovery Act, which will require producers to implement an end-to-end system to optimize the repair or recycling of textiles, including apparel, accessories, handbags, backpacks, draperies, shower curtains, furnishings, upholstery, bedding, towels, napkins and tablecloths.

Although Nijmeh is pushing for a landfill ban on all textile waste, that provision is not yet included in current drafts of the law. That provision would require 'separate collection' of textile waste by municipal sanitation departments, similar to how recyclables are currently collected, separate from general waste. Such a landfill ban on textiles would be a first in the nation law.

GEF PARTNERS WITH CLUB AMERICA & FUNDACIÓN TELEvisa TO BRING TEXTILE RECYCLING MOVEMENT TO MEXICO

The Green Education Foundation has extended its mission to Mexico, partnering with Club America and Fundación Televisa to bring the textile recycling movement to Mexico. This visionary collaboration debuts GEF's industry-leading Neighborhood Donation Recycling Stations (NDRS) at Club America's competitions, including at Mexico City's gigantic Estadio Azteca Stadium.

This expansion emphasizes sustainable practices, trailblazing the landscape of sports textile recycling, with a powerful message of environmental responsibility and sustainability at the heart of Mexican sports culture.

NDRS, provide an easy way to reduce waste and recycle materials that would otherwise end up in landfills. As opposed to just throwing your old sports shoes away, you can "give them wings" by recycling them and giving them a second life!

Under Fundación Televisa's 20 years anniversary and Club America's environmental commitment, these initiatives will make a difference in helping to create a more sustainable future for all. Over the years, the more victorious soccer team in Mexico and North America has embraced several actions in order to promote the environment's betterment.



LOFGREN'S STUNNING REVERSAL ON MUWEKMA SOVEREIGNTY RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT HER MOTIVES



Tribal leaders don't understand what is motivating Lofgren's sudden opposition to restoring the Tribe's sovereignty — after decades of support, even demanding that the Administration act.

In a stunning reversal that is sending shock waves across the Bay Area's political community, Rep. Zoe Lofgren is publicly refusing to support the federal recognition of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe — despite overwhelming DNA, anthropological and genealogical evidence, federal court findings, and historical documentation proving beyond any doubt that the Tribe is precisely who they say they are: the Indigenous people of the Bay Area.

In December 2022, Lofgren's office told the Tribe flatly: "We won't support any federal recognition legislation unless it explicitly prevents casino gaming." Then again, in an in person meeting on Capitol Hill in the office of Rep. Anna Eshoo, Lofgren reiterated her demand. She did so again shortly thereafter in congressional correspondence from Eshoo's office, on Lofgren's behalf.

But such a request to restrict the ability of the Tribe to engage in economic development — or to otherwise curtail its sovereignty — is deeply offensive to indigenous leaders broadly, especially at a time when indigenous communities are demanding the repeal of colonial legal frameworks that marginalize their communities, subjugate their economies, and inhibit their nation-building.

The Congresswoman's stance also flies in the face of public opinion.

California voters have decided twice, by wide margins, that they are supportive of Indian gaming. Statewide referendums were held in 1998 and 2000 — trumping any polling or survey figures that Lofgren might allege.

In 1998, Measure 5 was approved by a vote of 62.38% to 37.62%, greatly expanding Tribal-State Gaming Compacts inside California. Santa Clara County — the base of Lofgren's district — voted to approve the measure 68.70% to 43.30%. Then in 2000, Measure 1A was approved by a vote of 64.50% to 35.50%, which authorized an amendment to the State constitution that clarified the

Progressive activists have been calling on Rep. Zoe Lofgren to retire to make room for the next generation of Bay Area political leaders.

Tribe's right to conduct gaming on Tribal lands. In Lofgren's Santa Clara County, voters approved the measure 69.80% to 40.20%.

As gaming continues to expand into new states and verticals, Americans broadly continue to appreciate the benefits and excitement of legal, regulated gaming. Gaming industry research

conducted by the American Gaming Association shows that 42% of American adults participated in some form of gambling in the past year, while casino visitation rebounded to 34% of Americans, up from 28% in 2021.

The AGA's annual survey of Americans' attitudes towards gaming shows that two-thirds of Americans recognize gaming's economic impact. 84% say that gaming has a positive impact on the U.S. economy and 66% say that the gaming industry is a source of high quality jobs.

"Every time the Tribe engages with Rep. Lofgren, the congresswoman turns a conversation about the Muwekma's people's existence and survival — which should be celebrated — into a two-bit troupe about Indian casinos," John Thompson, a spokesperson for the Tribe's campaign for federal recognition, explains. "This discussion is about a lot of things — housing, survival, educating the public — but it's not a discussion about gaming. I'm aghast at her Office's continued treatment of tribal leaders, and I'm offended for them."

Staffers with Rep. Anna Eshoo's office repeatedly communicated to Muwekma Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh that Lofgren's support would be necessary to get the legislation filed and introduced in committee, despite her previous commitments to carry the Muwekma legislation.

Previously known — and



Rep. Lofgren had refused to meet Muwekma Ohlone leaders for nearly five years, despite knowing the Tribe well and working closely with the previous chairwoman.

unambiguously federally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as the Verona Band of Indians — the Tribe was illegally removed from a key list in a dastardly bureaucratic maneuver that effectively defrauded it of its federal recognition, something that is shockingly unlawful in the context of federal Indian law. As a constitutional law matter, a Tribe can only be terminated by an Act of Congress.

For the last forty years, the Tribe — which has never been lawfully terminated — has struggled to get back that federal status ever since. That status would restore the Tribe's ability to access federal housing programs that it desperately needs in the face of a relentless gentrification of its Bay Area homeland, which threatens to displace them from their homelands.

The status would also let the Tribe govern its own commercial activities and pursue nation-building projects by recognizing the Tribe's inherent civil regulatory jurisdiction as a

self-governing community.

"At this inflection point in the arc of our history, I have a solemn obligation to future generations of Muwekma children to assert a forward posture when it comes to the exercise of our rights to self-determination and the protection of our sovereignty," Chairwoman Nijmeh explains. "How could I, in good conscience, sign away the rights of self government and self-determination for future generations of Muwekma people? We want to nation build, not to sign away our rights."

"It would be an unconscionable betrayal of the oath I took to lead this Tribe to cede our sovereignty," Nijmeh adds. "This is about our right to govern ourselves, and to protect ourselves against a relentless gentrification of our Bay Area homeland, which threatens our very existence and our ability to continue to live as a Tribe."

In 2002, Lofgren even demanded that the Administration act, while on the floor of the House:

Graton Rancheria doles contributions to Senators, aims to terminate the Muwekma Tribe's existence

Greg Sarris, the controversial Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, is attempting to improperly influence state and federal elected officials, including State Senator Bill Dodd, a Democrat of Napa Valley, and the Chairman of the powerful Government Organization Committee. Dodd represents the district where the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria own the Graton Casino & Resort, near Santa Rosa.



In 2022, at Sarris' urging, Dodd refused to allow a vote in committee on SJR-13, a resolution that endorses the federal government's recognition of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. Dodd effectively killed the bill in his Senate Committee.

The Graton Rancheria Tribe received federal recognition in 2000 and ever since has been spending heavily to influence state and federal elected officials to prevent other Indian Tribes from opening casinos – most especially in the Bay Area. Sarris has served as the Tribe's chairman since 1992, though questions have long surrounded his lineage.

Sarris is so close to Dodd that, in June of this year, Dodd immediately pulled his own legislation to legalize sports betting in California after being personally lobbied by Sarris.

Now, Sarris is rounding up political contributions from a slew of other Indian gaming Tribes across California, and has been directing them to "throw money" at Senator David Cortese, who represents the ancestral territory of the Muwekma Ohlone Nation, a Tribe of some 614 people who have lived in the San Francisco Bay region for millennia.

Cortese is widely seen as a vocal and courageous ally of the Muwekma Ohlone, who has committed to helping the Tribe fight for federal recognition.

"Senator Cortese has the highest standard of personal

ethics and deep commitment to social justice for indigenous communities. He would never allow casino Tribes' contributions to influence his opinion of what is right," explains one Ohlone activist, who is an organizer of a student organization in San Jose.

"We have enormous respect for Senator Cortese's integrity, and hope to see him in public service for a very long time."

Sarris has been a brutal, deep-pocketed, and dastardly opponent of recognizing California's poorest, most marginalized, most landless Indians whom – like the Muwekma – often have stronger Tribal political institutions, more vibrant cultural communities, and stronger genetic lineages than the Tribe that he petitioned the Congress to recognize in 2000.

"For decades, the gaming Tribes have been lobbying elected officials and the State and federal level, and essentially bribing them to deny the existence and peoplehood of the Muwekma Nation," the activist argues. "For politicians to reduce the issue of a people's existence into a racist trope about Indian casinos is deeply offensive. That some elected officials are so transactional about genocide is outrageous," he adds.

Critics claim that Sarris, a professor and novelist, has been propagating a wide ranging identity fraud – and doesn't have a trace of Indian heritage at all.

long struggle of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe as they continue to seek justice and to finally, and without further delay, achieve their goal of their reaffirmation of their tribal status by the federal government. This process has dragged on long enough. I hope that the BIA and the DOI will do the right thing and act positively to grant the Muwekma Ohlone tribe their rights as a Federally Recognized Indian Tribe. To do anything else is to deny this tribe justice. They have waited patiently and should not have to wait any longer," Lofgren wrote.

"It is not uncommon for politicians to 'evolve' or 'change position' on an issue or policy over time, but Rep. Lofgren is

moving in reverse. We know the answer why her support has chilled, as does she. Savvy politicians do their best to avoid 'eating their words,' particularly two-decade old on-the-record comments," Thompson postulates. "She has wrongly assumed Muwekma will cave, and with the heat turning up, considerably, she will undoubtedly scramble to cover herself behind colleagues, or by any necessary means."

According to the California Gambling Control Commission, as of January 2021, the state of California has ratified 75 tribal gaming compacts with 75 California tribes and put into effect Secretarial Procedures with three additional tribes. Of the 75

UC Berkeley Chancellor calls on Senate Indian Affairs Committee to recognize Muwekma Ohlone Tribe

Carol T. Christ, the Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, is calling on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee to recognize the Muwekma Ohlone so that the institution can comply with the Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) and repatriate tens of thousands of ancestral remains and hundreds of thousands of burial objects. Under current law, the University can only repatriate burial remains to federally recognized Tribes.

In a letter to Chairman Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski, Christ admits to sharing the Committee's "frustration at the lack of progress in returning all of the Native American ancestors and cultural objects that have been held by the campus, including in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, for decades."

"For UC Berkeley, the human remains and cultural items in its possession were predominantly collected from the Bay Area. The majority of Bay Area Tribes are not federally recognized, presenting a significant obstacle..." the University explains in correspondence dated June 16, 2023, in response to questions posed by the Committee.

"45% of ancestors still listed as culturally unidentifiable are likely Ohlone ancestors, but cannot be 'culturally affiliated' under NAGPRA, as none of the Ohlone Tribes have federal recognition (25 USC 3001(7))," the University explains.

"Federal recognition, or reinstatement of removed recognition in some cases, would expedite the return of these ancestors and belongings, allowing UC Berkeley to repatriate these within one year," the University writes.

"UC Berkeley is unique within the UC system because of the scope, size, and age of the collections located on our campus. The campus is 155 years old, and for many decades served as California's only major collecting institution through the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology. We are not proud of the fact that the NAGPRA eligible collection at the museum is one of the largest collections in the country and are working to address this injustice,"



Chairman Brian Schatz, of Hawaii, was asked by the Tribe to hold hearings and hear from experts in anthropology and genetics. It has not been scheduled yet.

Chancellor Christ admits.

"We acknowledge and apologize for the wrongs committed by UC Berkeley against Native American people, particularly with respect to how the University has handled its repatriation responsibilities. We recognize and regret that in the past, representatives of the University, and others, removed ancestors and sacred belongings without tribal permission or consultation, and that those ancestral remains and belongings were held for the purpose of research and teaching. We have apologized directly

to Tribal representatives, and we are currently engaged in a broad range of efforts to expedite the repatriation process and improve the campus's relationship with Tribal Nations," she writes.

"The campus is committed to the complete return of all Native American ancestors and cultural belongings... We realize that so long as the remains of ancestors, sacred objects, and cultural items remain in the University's possession, justice will not be served, and the healing we seek will not be complete," Chancellor Christ concludes.



compacted tribes, 63 operate 66 casinos throughout the state.

Under the 1999 compacts, tribes were limited to around 2,000 Class III gaming machines. The 2004 Compacts allowed tribes to operate an unlimited number of Class III gaming machines. The 2012 Compacts allow some tribes to operate over 2,000 machines.

"Why is casino number 67 too much for Lofgren? Why didn't she say anything about casino number 47 or 57?" Thompson asks, rhetorically. "Why would she ask this one Tribe to be the only Tribe in California not to have the right to conduct gaming? It's a shake down, it seems to me."





MUWEKMA OHLONE TRIBE'S MOUNTING EVIDENCE MAKES A RESTORATION OF ITS FEDERAL STATUS INEVITABLE

Housing costs are creating newfound urgency for the Tribe, which hopes to stay on its 10,000 year homeland.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has been struggling for affirmation of their federal status for the past 40 years. In recent years, a grassroots movement called 'Justice for Muwekma' has been percolating on college campuses and in high schools across the Bay Area. Letter writing campaigns, lectures, symposiums, door-to-door organizing, and protests.

Federal recognition, as defined by the Department of Interior, recognizes a government-to-government relationship between the United States and a Tribe, allowing the Tribe to govern itself as a domestic dependent nation and exercise its inherent sovereignty.

The movement for Muwekma Ohlone federal recognition gained momentum over the last year, highlighting the importance of constituent voices and votes in holding members of Congress accountable.

Obtaining federal recognition would enable the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, which consists of some 614 tribal members, to repatriate artifacts from the University of California at Berkeley, which still holds tens of thousands of thousands or artifacts that belong to the Tribe.

Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh credited the support of local Bay Area students, including those at Stanford University, for energizing the Justice for Muwekma

ma movement.

The Chairwoman is pursuing three strategies simultaneously: administrative, legislative, and judicial.

The Tribe has asked the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to acknowledge that it made an error in excluding the Ohlone from the official list of recognized tribes, when it was first drafted in 1978. That corrective would be as simple as a letter from Secretary Deb Haaland, and it would take effect immediately.

The Tribe has also met with senior members of Congress from both parties, seeking legisla-

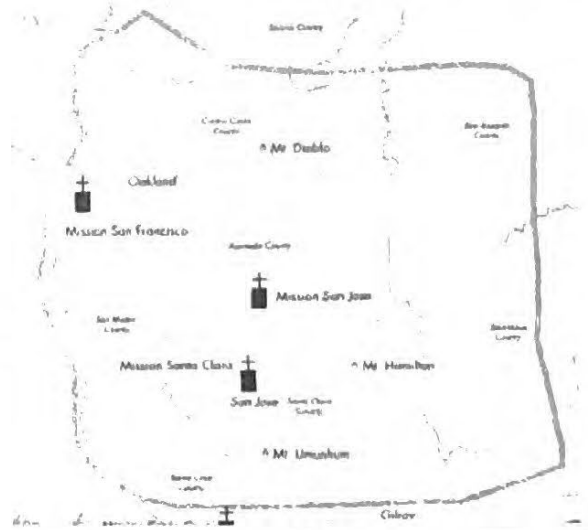
DNA studies conclusively link the Tribe to 2,000 year old burial sites in the Bay Area.

tion that affirms the Tribe's status. While Republican members have eagerly supported legislation, Democrat members from the Bay Area have refused to introduce the legislation. There are 68 Indian casinos in California, and they donate heavily to the Democratic Party.

The third avenue for the Tribe is through the Courts. Just last year, a federal district court judge in the Northern District of California found that the Tribe retains its sovereign immunity, despite not being on the BIA's list of officially recognized tribes. The judicial finding affirms the tribe's ability to exercise its sovereign immunity, and many expect that it will continue to do so.

Previously, out of 356 letters of intent to petition for federal recognition, only 18 petitions have been acknowledged through the Part 83 of Title 25 pathway at the Office of Federal Acknowledgement. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe began its efforts for federal recognition in the early 1980s and submitted a petition to the U.S. government in 1996. While the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) provided a positive determination in 1996, confirming that the Tribe was previously unambiguously federally recognized in 1914 and 1927, the BIA required additional documentation and adherence to the federal recognition regulations for reinstatement.

"The BIA's assertion that that the community ceased to exist from 1927 to 1985, is inaccurate," explained Dr. Les Field, the chairman of the Anthropology Department at the University of New Mexico, who has been working with the Tribe since the early 1990s.



The Muwekma Tribe's ancestors were enslaved at Mission Delores, Mission San Jose, and Mission Santa Clara.

After the Muwekma Ohlone were released from their enslavement in the Missions during the Spanish period, they didn't have villages to go back to, so they settled in San Jose until the American period.

California underwent rapid transformation due to the Gold Rush and the ensuing influx of settlers. The first Governor of California declared a "war of extinction of the Indian race", offered \$5 bounties on each Indian head, and funded militias to hunt them down.

At the time, San Jose was the Capitol of California and home to its genocidal founding fathers. The Tribe found refuge from the bounties and militias on the ranch lands of Phoebe Hearst, near Pleasanton, Niles, and Sunol. They served as her workforce, and she protect them from the genocide that engulfed the region.

The Tribe was identified in 1905 by a census of non-reservation Indians conducted by CE Kelsey, an attorney from San

Jose who appointed Special Indian Agent for California. The Muwekma Ohlone were identified as the Verona Band of Alameda County, but no one ever told them that's what they were being called. Kelsey listed them first on a congressionally-mandated list of homeless bands of Indians who were in need of land.

But in 1927, a racist Indian Agent who led the Sacramento Agency by the name of Lafayette Dorrington removed Muwekma and 127 other landless Indian tribes from that list. He wanted to use those congressionally appropriated funds for other things.

During this period, efforts to assimilate Native peoples intensified, with the establishment of Indian boarding schools, where children were forcibly separated from their families and subjected to cultural suppression and abuse. Muwekma members were being sent to Indian boarding schools up until 1947.

Access to the national eagle feather repository is religious freedom issue

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay called upon Interior Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) this week to make the National Eagle Feather Repository, maintained by the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Department of the Interior, accessible to the Tribe. Current published policy guidelines prevent Faithkeepers of the Tribe from acquiring Eagle Feathers for religious and spiritual use.



Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh wrote in a letter to Haaland that the federal policy violates the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and should be changed.

"Our religious practices and many of our ceremonies require these feathers, and preventing our access to them would be a continuation of the federal government's longstanding policy objective of eradicating us," Nijmeh wrote in the letter.

Eagle feathers are needed to conduct many of the Tribe's ceremonies. Eagle feathers symbolize what is highest, bravest, strongest, and holiest. These feathers have strong medicine for Indigenous people. The eagle is a highly protected creature under US law, but exceptions are made to allow Native Americans to possess their feathers within specific conditions. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, only enrolled members of feder-

ally recognized tribes can apply to possess eagle feathers from the Repository for religious purposes.

"This is no small injustice. It is a deep and painful assault against us, intended to prevent us from practicing our traditions and keeping sacred ceremonies alive. This policy is just one small policy of the thousands of federal policies that were architected to destroy our People and assimilate us out of existence. It's an offense of the highest order, and it's akin to Gov. Peter Burnett's state-sponsored bounties on our heads," Nijmeh said in the release.

Indian Country has an enormous amount of hope for justice invested in Haaland's historic tenure leading the Interior Department. The department includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs and also has control over federal lands, natural resources, and the environment.

Urban planners are proposing a sweeping reconstruction of San Francisco's low-lying shoreline, in order to address the long-term threat of rising sea levels as a result of global climate change. Real estate and economic development experts have been encouraging the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe to partner with the Port Authority of San Francisco to anchor that reconstruction with a world class tourism and entertainment attraction, proposed as 'The Muwekma Wharfs', with sweeping public spaces, family-oriented attractions, and a splendidly unique gaming venue.

Tribe would only pursue gaming if a host municipality asked for it, Muwekma leaders say

When Charlene Concepción Nijmeh first became Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, one of the first actions she took was to terminate the Tribe's contract with a longstanding gaming investor who had been double-dealing against the Tribe's interests.

Today, the Tribe has no plans to pursue gaming but is refusing to cede any sovereignty in exchange for legislation that would ostensibly affirm the Tribe's federal status.

Under Nijmeh's leadership, the Tribe is pursuing recycling and solar energy projects. The Tribe just signed a memorandum of understanding with one of Turkey's leading engineers to bring a plant to California that will reprocess plastic bottles into high-quality fabrics.

The Tribe is also leading an investment group that will locate a solar panel manufacturing plant in the United States, on Indian land – and Nijmeh is partnering with one of the world's largest textile manufacturers to make it happen.

Under California law, every federally recognized Tribe is entitled to two casino operating licenses, with more than 2,500 slot machines at each location.

Nijmeh isn't necessarily opposed to pursuing gaming, but sees it as a daunting undertaking that the Tribe is not ready to pursue. She says that the decision is one for the next generation to decide, and thinks it could take ten years to make a reality.

"As a Tribe, our government wants to be a good neighbor, and we would never try to put a casino in a community where people don't want it," Nijmeh explains.

"But in my conversations with leaders of the Building and Construction Trades unions, they really want us to build a casino," Nijmeh explains. "It would mean 10,000 construction jobs, and it



would create at least 3,000 permanent and easily unionizable jobs in hospitality."

Nijmeh concedes that if the City of San Jose, the City of San Francisco, the City of Berkeley, or another municipality approached the Tribe and requested its partnership in developing a gaming attraction, that she would bring it to the Tribal Council for a vote.

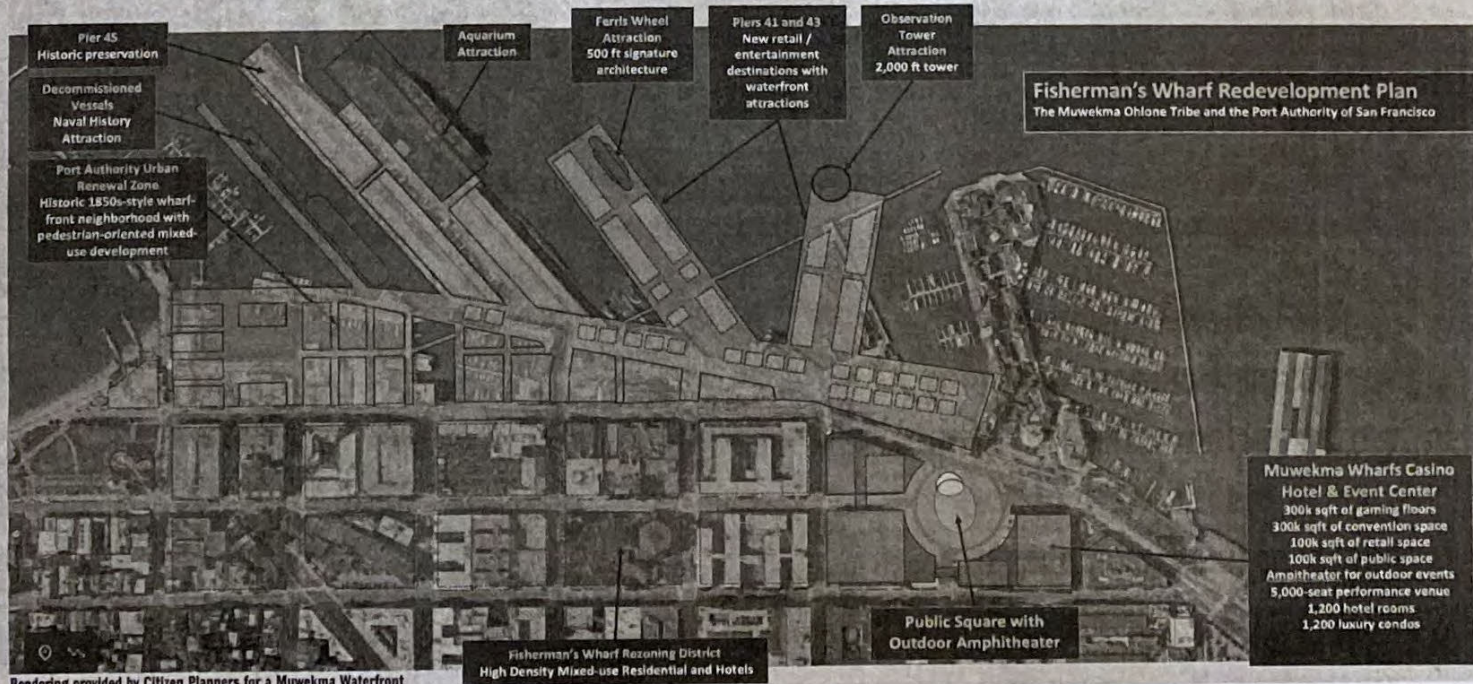
The Tribe's members were rounded up from hundreds of Bay Area villages, and they were enslaved at Mission Dolores in San Francisco, Mission San Jose, and Mission Santa Clara, and were moved around like cattle in a feudal forced labor system. As such, the Tribe's aboriginal territory includes a vast swath of Northern California surrounding the San Francisco Bay. That would make any municipality in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, or Alameda Counties eligible to host a Muwekma gaming venue. Agreements with host municipalities often include

lucrative revenue sharing agreements that fund a slew of community investments and amenities.

With San Francisco's current budget deficits, spiraling tourism industry, and an indefensibly tacky vibe at Fisherman's Wharf, many think a world class gaming venue could be precisely what the city needs.

The Tribe has been approached by some urban designers who want Muwekma to anchor a waterfront revival that would reconstruct most of the Fisherman's Wharf section of the city – with a vast new system of pedestrian promenades and alleyways, commercial piers, and bustling store-lined streetscapes.

They envision a world class casino with 300,000 square feet of gaming space, 3,000 hotel rooms, and 1,000 luxury condos in a three-block parcel that would include a 100,000 square foot public square and amphitheater.



Rendering provided by Citizen Planners for a Muwekma Waterfront

FOR NIJMEH, HUMANITARIAN WORK DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN TURKEY "WHAT FRIENDS DO" AFTER NATURAL

When a devastating earthquake hit Turkey last spring, Charlene Nijmeh responded by traveling to the Syrian border to deliver relief supplies like clothing, blankets, and food, to the hardest-hit areas.

At the time, official estimates put the death toll at 50,000, but the actual death toll could be as high as 200,000. Millions were made homeless or displaced. In some communities, more than one-third of all buildings were destroyed.

Nijmeh predicts that the reconstruction process will take a decade, but she is optimistic that — if Turkey and the United States grow closer together — that the Bay Area can play a big role in helping the Turkish people lay modern infrastructure systems and to rebuild in a way that brings extraordinary new economic opportunities to the Turkish-Syrian border region.

"The partnership between the Turkish people and the American people is a strong and enduring one. It's a relationship that is critical to global security. It's one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world," she told local reporters at the time.

"Friends are there for each other when in need. That's why I'm here in Turkey delivering relief supplies to people impacted by the devastation. The relationship between our people is so much stronger than the relationship between our governments," she added.

Nijmeh's textile recycling companies have operations in Turkey, and one of her business partners lost dozens of family members in the disaster.

Nijmeh was able to leverage her global networks in the textile recycling space to provide relief supplies, without taxpayer funding or government support.

Nijmeh was interviewed by journalists at the time, and continues to have high aspirations for future trade missions between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Turkish-Syrian Border.

Q: Why are you in Turkey?

A: I'm here to distribute clothing, blankets, and relief supplies directly to people impacted by this

devastating earthquake. This is what friends do. It's important that we collaborate to support the region's long-term economic reconstruction, and strengthen the ties between our people. An even closer relationship will bring stability and progress to the region.

Q: What does your company do in Turkey?

A: Our company has unique capabilities in global recycling logistics. Because of the work we do in textile recycling in the region, we are able to distribute needed supplies to the most vulnerable populations very quickly and very efficiently.

Q: Tell us about your environmental work?

A: Globally, we divert well upwards of 60 million pounds of used textiles from landfills every year. It's an enormous success in landfill diversion — every single year. The textiles that cannot be reused and resold are reprocessed into fiber and repurposed for all sorts of consumer products, from carpet underlay, to mattresses, to housing insulation.

Q: How can the Bay Area business community play a role in the region's reconstruction?

A: The Bay Area is home to the most innovative and forward thinking companies in the world. Turkey wants to rebuild better than it's ever been before. The Bay Area has new infrastructure technologies that we can bring to Turkey — from high-speed satellite Internet service, to Elon Musk's hyper loop, and driverless cars. And trade relationships are just the beginning.

Q: Why do you focus on textiles specifically?

A: The textile industry is considered the most ecologically harmful industry in the world. It is the second most polluting industry in the world after oil and gas. Cotton is a thirsty crop. It requires 2,700 liters of water to make one T-shirt. That's what one person drinks in 2.5 years. The world uses 1.3 trillion gallons of water each year for fabric dyeing alone. In areas already facing water stress, this can be particularly damaging. Recycling textiles is critically important to protecting the environment.

Nijmeh believes that global philanthropy has a role to play in humanitarian relief following natural disasters, and she wants to lead by example.



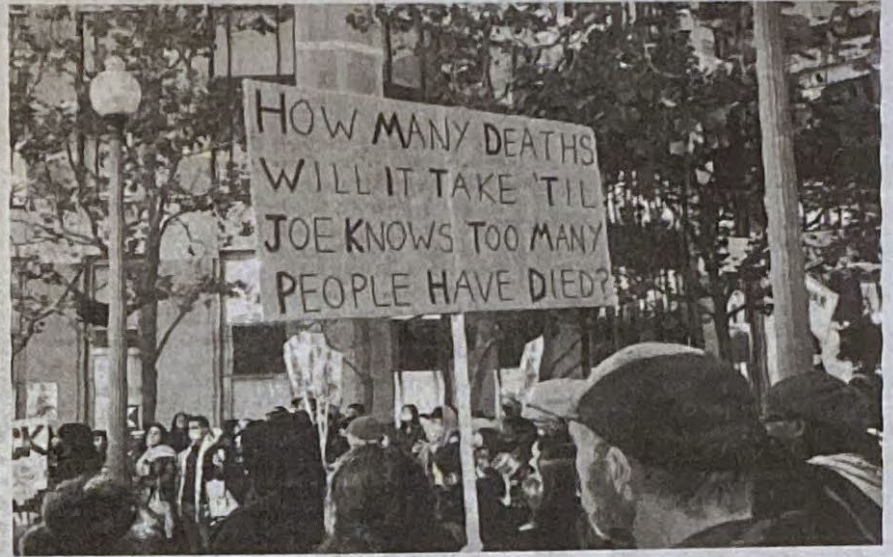
One of Nijmeh's business partners lost more than two dozen relatives in a single night.



FOLLOWING Y WAS "JUST DISASTERS



LETTER TO THE EDITOR: LOFGREN IS STILL REFUSING TO SPEAK UP FOR PALESTINIANS BEING MERCILESSLY KILLED



Dear Editor,

I am distressed over the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict and, specifically, my disappointment with Representative Zoe Lofgren's timid stance on the matter – still unwilling to call for an immediate ceasefire.

It is a complex issue with deep historical roots and profound humanitarian implications. I believe that it necessitates a bold and resolute stance from our elected leaders—one rooted in the principles of human rights and the pursuit of peace. It is from this perspective that I find Rep. Lofgren's positions to be excessively beholden to Zionist interests and her reluctance to demand an immediate ceasefire troubling.

It is Zoe Lofgren's duty to put America's interests first, but increasingly it seems that she is willing to put Israel's interests above all else.

This is not just about politics; it is about human lives. Every day that the conflict continues, more innocent lives are lost, and the hopes for a stable and peaceful future in the region are further diminished. Leadership requires the courage to advocate for what

is right, even in the midst of geopolitical complexity.

I urge Rep. Lofgren to consider the impact of her positions, to elevate the urgency for peace, and to align her voice with those calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Our nation has a profound role to play on the global stage, and it is imperative that our representatives act decisively in times of crisis.

Representative democracy means reflecting the conscience of the people. It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter, hoping it reaches our representative with the gravity and sincerity with which it is intended.

We, the constituents, yearn for a world in which peace is the cornerstone of international relations. To that end, I urge Rep. Lofgren to take a firmer stance in advocating for an immediate ceasefire and to work tirelessly for a resolution that ensures the safety and dignity of all people involved.

Sincerely,

Helen Tang, 26
San Jose

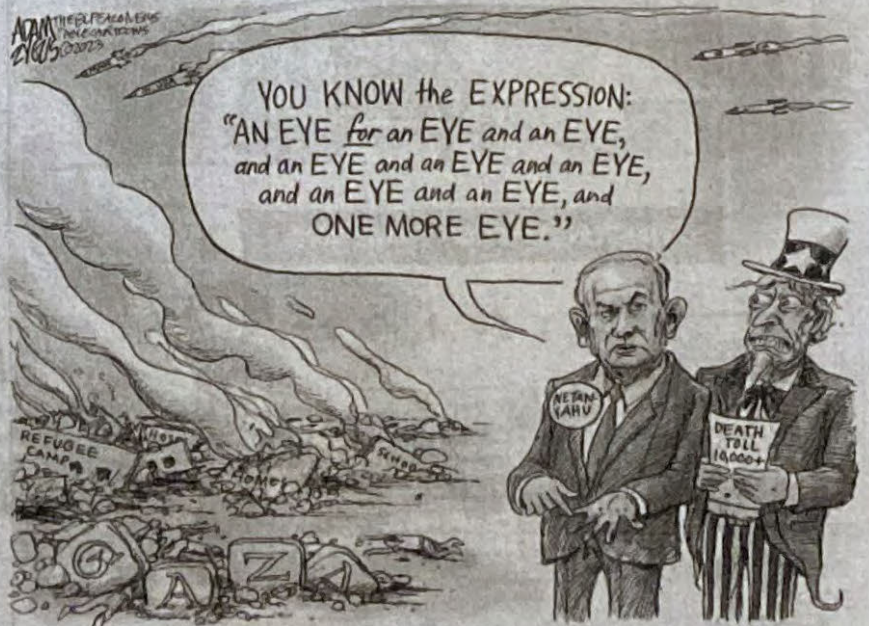
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Primary Election

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Don't Delay, Vote Today!

Early vote-by-mail ballot voting period is from February 5 through March 5, 2024.

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on March 5, 2024, Election Day!



VOTE SAFE CALIFORNIA

Every registered voter in California will receive a vote-by-mail ballot.

Vote-by-mail ballots are mailed on or before February 5.

Vote-by-mail ballots can be voted and returned as soon as they are received.

Vote-by-mail drop boxes open February 6.

In-person voting options will be available in all counties.



Mobile-Friendly
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Official
Voter
Information
Guide



Certificate of Correctness

I, Shirley N. Weber, Secretary of State of the State of California, hereby certify that the information on this ballot is correct and that the ballot is valid for use in the 2024 Primary Election. This certificate is valid for use in the 2024 Primary Election. I, Shirley N. Weber, Secretary of State of the State of California, hereby certify that the information on this ballot is correct and that the ballot is valid for use in the 2024 Primary Election. This certificate is valid for use in the 2024 Primary Election.

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.
Secretary of State

SOUTH BAY INDIGENOUS SOLIDARTY GROUP BACKS CHARLENE FOR CONGRESS



Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Chairwoman Charlene Concepcion Nijmeh's candidacy is historic. No person of Indigenous Californian ancestry has ever represented the State of California in the United States Congress. Actions taken by Federal and State officials have denied treaties and erased the federal status of Ohlone Peoples. No Ohlone land has ever been formally ceded by any Ohlone Tribe.

South Bay Indigenous Solidarity has voted to formally endorse Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Chair Charlene Nijmeh in her campaign for Congress in District 18.

The Ohlone population has faced genocide and mass depopulation, due to the actions of colonial regimes and settler populations. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area is one of three historically federally recognized Ohlone Tribes. The Federal recognition of these three Tribes was never revoked by any Act of Congress.

"California deserves a Representative who understands

the concerns of its residents and is responsive when those residents reach out," the organization insists. "Chairwoman Nijmeh has been an effective leader of the Muwekma Ohlone."

South Bay Indigenous Solidarity is a grassroots organization founded in 2019, on the ancestral lands and territory of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. The organization is a multi-ethnic group that supports Indigenous led, grassroots efforts to promote human rights, restore Indigenous land stewardship and preserve threatened cultural, burial, and sacred sites.

YES, PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS CAN REGISTER TO VOTE, HERE IS HOW

People experiencing homelessness in California can register to vote as long as you meet the standard eligibility criteria required of all voters. To register to vote in California you must be:

- a citizen of the United States
- a legal resident of your state
- at least 18 by election day
- not in prison, on probation or parole for a felony conviction
- not declared mentally incompetent by a court

You may be eligible to vote if you are a convicted felon whose voting rights have been restored, which varies based on local laws.

You do not need a street address to register to vote. The section of the voter registration form that asks for your address allows voters to describe the place where you spend most of your time. You can include cross streets and routes to help establish your right to vote in your community.

You do not need ID to register to vote. If you do not have a California ID card or know the last four digits of your social security number you can leave this section blank. According to a recent Los Angeles Times article, "In most cases, you will not be required to show identification when you vote

in person. If you are voting for the first time in a federal election, you may be asked to show identification if you did not provide the last four digits of your Social Security number or driver's license or California ID number when you registered to vote."

You should include an address where you receive mail if possible. This can be a post office box, the home of someone you trust, or a business that has agreed to receive mail on your behalf. If you include an address where you can receive mail you should be able to vote by mail in the election this fall.

This year it is especially important for all voters to make a plan to vote that will work best for them. This guide has information members of California's disability community can use to make their voting plan this fall.



Register to Vote



"WHISTLING PAST THE GRAVEYARD..."



The faces of San Jose's homelessness epidemic

There is a direct correlation between what the general public perceives about homelessness and how it affects policy change. Most people blame homelessness on the person experiencing it instead of the increasing shortage of affordable housing, lack of employment, a living wage or the countless reasons that put a person at risk. This lack of understanding creates a dangerous cycle of misperception that leads to the inability to effectively address the root causes of homelessness.



On the streets, he goes by the name of Grim. It's what people call him. Grim has grown to like the name since the streets are all he has ever known.

When I asked Grim how long has he lived homeless in San Jose, he responded: "20 years, I am 29." Grim went on to explain that at the age of 9 he was removed from his family by child protective services. Grim was placed into

foster care but he didn't like it and ran away. The streets have been Grim's family since. Can you imagine growing up homeless from such a young age?

Grim's story is important because the public needs to see the story behind addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. Grim is a byproduct of a broken social services and foster care system.



When asked homelessness in San Jose, Shannon responded that it is cold and very rough. "People steal from you when you're sleeping," Shannon continued. Bob, her father, goes on to say there is not

enough housing. Bob says the only place available to them is the local shelter and it's too crowded. Shannon and her father have been homeless since 1994.



Yogi is 69 years old and sleeping outside in San Jose, one of the wealthiest regions of our great country. Yogi became homeless after her first husband died. Remarkably, Yogi is still in positive spirits even after being homeless for 25 years. No one should be

homeless for even a day, but for 25 years living outside in Silicon Valley - this is a tragedy.

Yogi says they do everything they can to make money, but they just cannot afford the high cost of rents in the area.



Walt is a displaced tech worker living on the streets of San Jose. He worked in the electronic industry for thirty years. Then around ten years ago, his job "went away", and soon after he ended up homeless.

Walt claims to be "comfortably homeless." He manages to stay warm. He manages to stay clean. Get gets off the streets into a hotel a few times a month. Although some might think this is

OK, homelessness is never a way for people to live. Add to that Walt is a homeless veteran and a senior, he should not be on the streets of Silicon Valley.

Walt refuses to accept any kind of public assistance. He believes that type of support should go to women and families who need it. Instead, Walt plays his flute to raise the money he needs.



Jimmy is a homeless Vietnam Veteran living in a homeless shelter near San Jose. He was renting a room, but because of lack of work was not able to pay rent. Jimmy then found himself in court and eventually the streets.

Jimmy was lucky this time. He found EHC LifeBuilders and didn't spend any "street time." But Jimmy has been homeless be-

fore. Once for four years.

The good news is Jimmy has a plan. The Veterans Administration has been paying benefits and Jimmy believes he will be back on his feet soon.

His wishes are simple: that no one has to go through what he went through and that our country gets better.



Heather is a single mom with two daughters doing the very best she can to survive homelessness. We met this past fall in San Jose, California. For five years they have

been in and out of shelters and hotels. Heather says it is really hard to get housing without a job, and although she continues to look for work, no one wants to hire her.



Edwin has been homeless two years. He says he is mechanically inclined but survives mostly by cleaning carpets. He lives in Coyote Creek in San Jose. "How come they can't look out for us right here?" he asks, referencing government responses to natural disasters.



Nicolas has been homeless in San Jose for about a year. He doesn't have an ID, which makes it challenging to find work or support. He has been panhandling to get by. He is passionate about ecology and worried about the dwindling bee population. He dreams about getting into school to study ecology.



At 15, Gerardo was kicked out by his mother for being gay. He had a nervous breakdown and lost his job as a result at age 23. He has been homeless for four years, but feels like he is on the brink of turning his life around. He wishes that everyone was able to afford a house.



Evelin lives near San Jose, California and she has over a month sober. Evelin says "I'm not interested in doing any drugs. I'm just interested in getting a safe place to stay." That's a very powerful statement. Evelin was lucky. She found EHC LifeBuilders, but Santa Clara County is badly in need of more supportive housing so more people can find the help they need to rebuild their lives.

To listen to these stories of San Jose residents who are struggling with homelessness, scan here:



ASTROLOGY: PLANETARY ALIGNMENTS ARE CONDUSIVE TO NEW BEGINNINGS



Aries
March 21 - April 19

This week, Aries, you may find yourself longing for something new and exciting. Embrace this thirst for change and use it as an opportunity to explore fresh perspectives. It's time to break free from old patterns and embrace innovative ideas. Trust your instincts and let them guide you as you navigate the path of progress. Remember, change can be your ally, empowering you to make a positive impact and lead the way towards a brighter future. Embrace the winds of change and be the catalyst for transformation.

Taurus
April 20 - May 20

Dear Taurus, the time has come to let go of the familiar and open yourself up to new possibilities. Change may be unsettling, but it also brings growth and renewal. Embrace the idea of reevaluating your beliefs, relationships, and goals. Step outside your comfort zone and welcome fresh perspectives. By embracing change, you can carve a path towards a better future, both for yourself and others. Trust in the strength of your convictions and seize the opportunity to create positive change around you.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Gemini, your quick-witted nature can spark positive change in your life and beyond. Embrace your innate curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Seek out new ideas, perspectives, and experiences this week. Engage in conversations that challenge your existing beliefs and broaden your horizons. Embracing change and new ideas will lead you to uncharted territories where you can make a difference. Remember, innovation and transformation are your allies - let them guide you towards a future filled with endless possibilities.

Cancer
June 21 - July 22

Dear Cancer, it's time to embrace the winds of change and let go of old habits and outdated routines. This week presents an opportunity for personal growth and transformation. Explore alternative ways of thinking and challenge the status quo. By embracing change, you can inspire those around you to do the same. Be the catalyst for progress and let your intuition guide you towards a brighter future. Remember, change may initially be uncomfortable, but its rewards are worth the effort.

Leo
July 23 - August 22

Leo, this week, the cosmos beckons you to navigate uncharted waters and embrace new ideas. The time has come to leave behind outdated opinions and routines and embark on a journey of self-reinvention. Embrace your natural charisma and leadership qualities to inspire others to embrace change. By challenging traditional notions, you can pave the way for progress and foster a sense of unity. Embrace the winds of change and let them guide you towards a future where everyone can shine and prosper.

Virgo
August 23 - September 22

Virgo, this week, you are presented with an opportunity to break free from self-imposed limitations and embrace new ways of thinking. Stay open to unexplored ideas and perspectives that can broaden your horizons. Trust your instincts and let go of old patterns that no longer serve you. Embracing change will allow you to tap into your full potential and make a positive impact on yourself and those around you. Embrace the spirit of transformation and step into a future filled with growth and advancement.

Libra
September 23 - October 22

Dear Libra, this week embodies the promise of change and renewal. Embrace the idea of turning the page on old ways and embrace new ideas with open arms. By seeking harmony and balance, you can create a positive impact on your relationships and the world around you. Embrace progressive attitudes and allow yourself to find new ways of fostering cooperation and understanding. By embracing change and innovation, you can play a crucial role in creating a future filled with unity and fairness.

Scorpio
October 23 - November 21

Scorpio, change may sometimes be intimidating, but this week, it is your ally. Embrace the transformative energy that surrounds you and let go of old attachments. Recognize that by embracing new ideas and perspectives, you are presented with an opportunity for personal growth and empowerment. Use your passionate nature and determination to bring about positive change in your life and society. Embrace the depth of transformation and allow it to guide you to a brighter future.

Sagittarius
November 22 - December 21

Dear Sagittarius, this week, the universe invites you to embrace a new chapter in your life. Adventure awaits as you open yourself up to innovative ideas and different belief systems. Embrace change with an open mind, for it can pave the path to personal growth and wisdom. Embrace the winds of change and allow them to carry you towards a future filled with exciting possibilities. Share your newfound knowledge and inspire others to embrace new perspectives as well.

Capricorn
December 22 - January 19

Capricorn, this week presents an opportunity for you to manifest positive change in your life. Embrace the idea of breaking free from traditional patterns to create a more innovative future. Your dedication to your goals is commendable, but consider alternative routes that may be more efficacious. Change doesn't have to be daunting; it can be the catalyst for uncovering untapped potential. Let your determination fuel your journey not just towards personal success, but towards creating a legacy of progress and evolution.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

Innovative Aquarius, your forward-thinking nature is a beacon for change. This week, the stars encourage you to shine this light more broadly. Share your unique perspective and embrace the role of a trailblazer. The world needs visionaries like you to clear the way for progress. By cultivating new ideas and fostering change, you can contribute to a collective movement towards a more enlightened future. Boldly step forward, knowing that your actions can ripple out and create powerful transformations.

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

Pisces, with your empathy and intuition, you can sense the shifting tides of change. This week, foster this connection and channel it into positive action. Encourage those around you to open their minds and hearts to different perspectives. Your sensitivity is your strength, enabling you to be a guiding light as everyone navigates the evolving landscape of ideas. Embrace the transformative power of change, and let it not only shape your dreams but also bring about a new reality for all.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: LOFGREN'S AGE, HEALTH RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT FITNESS FOR OFFICE

Dear Editor -

I am writing to you as a concerned mother of three and an active voter in Morgan Hill. It has come to the community's attention that Representative Zoe Lofgren has been exhibiting signs of weariness, often forgetting the names of friends and supporters that she has known for decades. Many constituents are naturally concerned about her well-being. As someone who has been actively engaged in our civic conversation and who respects Rep. Lofgren's longstanding tenure, I find it is important that we approach this subject with care and empathy.

It is not my place to diagnose or speculate on Rep. Lofgren's health, as I am not a medical professional, but rather a concerned citizen who values her contributions to our society. I believe it is essential that we, as a community, offer support to our public servants when signs of strain become apparent. It's challenging for any individual to maintain the rigorous pace required by public service, and the demands can certainly take their toll on anyone - and especially so for someone of her advanced age.

Acknowledging the very human element of our representatives is key to fostering a compassionate political environment. Our concern should be for her capacity to continue to serve in her best capacity while ensuring her personal well-being is not being compromised.

I encourage my fellow constituents and community leaders to support Rep. Lofgren and her team during this time. I also encourage Rep. Lofgren to prioritize her health, as the demands of public office should not come at the cost of a person's well-being.

As a longtime supporter of Rep. Lofgren (even before I was drawn into her new district), it pains me to say that - if the widely circulated rumor that Rep. Lofgren is planning to resign her seat shortly after she wins reelection in November is true - then she should reconsider. I can understand that the political operator in her would instinctively try to protect the seat, preferring to hand it off to a hand-picked successor in a special election. But that wouldn't be fair to the voters, whose voices should matter, especially during these rare generational passing of the torch elections.

Of course, our thoughts are with Rep. Lofgren, and we extend to her our best wishes for health and resilience. We hope for an appropriate and respectful discourse surrounding this situation, and trust that she will take any necessary measures to address her health in a way that is fair to voters and doesn't deprive us of an opportunity to select her successor.

Sincerely,

Corina Padilla, 38
Morgan Hill

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: PARTISANSHIP IN CONGRESS IS DEEPLY DESTRUCTIVE TO ALL

Dear Editor,

We should all be troubled by the persistent and deepening divide of partisanship within the halls of Congress. It seems to me that the spirit of bipartisanship, once the linchpin to our nation's legislative progress, now flickers feebly in the overpowering shadow of party allegiance.

This unyielding partisanship stifles the constructive dialogue and debate which are essential to crafting policies that serve the broader interests of the American people. Our representatives appear more invested in the victory of their party than in the well-being of their constituents. As a result, critical legislation is entangled in endless political skirmishes, with little regard for the pressing needs of our nation.

Where there should be compromise, there is conflict; where there should be unity, there is division; and where there should be progress, there is stagnation. The excessive party loyalty witnessed today is antithetical to the very principles of democracy that our forebearers aspired to. It is not the competition between

parties that is inherently problematic; it is the inability to transcend such competition in pursuit of the common good.

I call upon our elected officials to remember their ultimate duty: to serve the public interest, not just that of their party. It is time to put aside partisan banners and reinvest in the collaborative spirit that can move our nation forward. The complexity of the issues we face demands nothing less than lawmakers willing to reach across the aisle, to find common ground, and to take concerted action for the betterment of all.

I urge fellow citizens to join me in this plea and to voice their discontent with the current state of affairs. Let us signal to our political representatives that the path to a stronger and more united country is built on bipartisanship and the collective pursuit of a brighter future for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Crystal Williams, 42
Watsonville

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: NIJMEH WAS RIGHT TO CALL HOUSING A 'HUMAN RIGHT' ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dear Editor—

As a resident of Salinas and a conscientious voter who is keenly following the developments of the upcoming congressional race, it is with a sense of newfound hope that I applaud the candidacy of Tribal Chairwoman Charlene Concepción Nijmeh for Congress. Charlene is a leader I believe has shown unparalleled courage in tackling the issue of housing, a subject that deeply affects all of us in the area.

What strikes me about Nijmeh's approach is her brave stance against the gentrification that has been very rapidly and very visibly altering the landscape of our communities. She has articulated what many of us have observed but lacked the platform to challenge: the undeniable gentrification occurring in our midst and the subtle mechanics of displacement behind it.

In a time when many have danced around the subject, Nijmeh has directly called out the elitist municipal zoning laws that have exacerbated the region's housing shortage — which has driven many community members into a crisis situation. Her pointed critique of policy-created housing scarcities demonstrates a profound understanding of the complexities involved in the housing debate. It's refreshing to witness a candidate who doesn't shy away from the tough conversations about the structural and legislative changes required to reverse these trends.

Even more commendable is Charlene's acknowledgment of the racially disparate impact the housing shortage has on people of color. By openly discussing how current policies perpetuate

the region's stark socio-spatial segregation patterns, she has positioned herself not just as a civic leader, but as an advocate for equality and justice.

I would even go as far as to speculate, alongside the 'moderate progressive' caucus to which Nijmeh belongs, that the elite interests within the Bay Area's real estate industry have long sought to subtly displace Latinos and other marginalized communities. This has enabled, perhaps even fostered, the continuation of the Bay Area's deeply chronic homelessness patterns and a longstanding affordability crisis that no one (except Charlene) seems to want to fix.

In Nijmeh's campaign, I see a focus on the human aspect of housing. Her proposals advocate for inclusive zoning measures and the expansion of affordable housing stock. This vision for a more equitable future in housing has captured the attention and, more importantly, the hearts of many voters who yearn for tangible change and inclusive growth — so that we can all afford to stay here and live here.

As we draw closer to election day, I invite my fellow voters to give Nijmeh's platform the serious consideration it deserves. It is time for us to rally behind a candidate who is not afraid to challenge the status quo and who has the audacity to envision a Bay Area where every person, irrespective of their ethnicity or economic background, has a place to call home.

Sincerely,

Luc Acosta, 67
Gilroy

Parents question Lofgren's support of transgendering children without consent

U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren has advocated for Big Pharma since her tenure in Congress began in 1995. Her footprint is enormous in the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, where she serves as the leading Democrat. Her position within this committee gives Lofgren significant sway over policy impacting Big Pharma, making her a crucial decision maker in discussions and legislation concerning pharmaceuticals and their regulations. Her position within this committee gives Lofgren significant sway over policy impacting Big Pharma, making her a crucial decision-maker in discussions and legislation concerning pharmaceuticals and their regulations.

For over 28 years, Big Pharma has been one of her top four contributors.

For a long time, her old district — the 19th — was as safe as anyone's district in Congress, having been gerrymandered to ensure it contained Big Tech and Big Pharma corridors, and the kind of folks who would donate to a Congressman who would put these industries first.

With the money they donated, she could ensure that no one in her Democratic party could compete against her.

The district being heavily Democratic meant there were never genuine elections. Lofgren kept getting reelected.

However, Lofgren's playing field has shifted following the 2020 census, which has altered her district boundaries to become a majority Latino district. For her to continue to be a national policy-maker for Big Pharma, she needs the permission of voters in one small area in California: the new 18th district.

The newly adjusted district introduces financial opportunities for millionaire Lofgren and her millionaire and billionaire friends.

One of the bravest new worlds of opportunity is Big Pharma's gender-transitioning industry.

Lofgren's stance has found favor among liberal, tech-savvy parents in her old district, who view gender transitioning as a progressive and prestigious choice for their children.

She must now work to persuade Latinos in her new district to embrace this burgeoning industry.

Traditionally conservative, the Latino community may not align with her views, posing a potential challenge for Lofgren's reelection campaign.

The upcoming election will undoubtedly test Lofgren's ability to maintain her influential role in Congress. She has always been ready to defend Big Pharma and its enterprises.

When attorney Gail Heriot stated, "an anatomical male student who 'identifies' as female really is [not] a girl. We are teaching young people a terrible lesson—sex is binary; one is either male or female, with precious few exceptions."

Lofgren retorted, "I think you're a bigot, lady! I think you're an ignorant bigot."

Lofgren said she could not allow such "bigotry to go into the record unchallenged."

Many Latinos, however, agree with Heriot's view and believe that children and adolescents cannot give informed consent to transitioning treatments due to significant complications, including sterilization.

Lofgren believes in the rights of children and adolescents to affirm their chosen identities with hormone treatment and surgical procedures.

Yes, she will admit there are potential risks associated with hormone treatments and surgeries.

Still, when weighed against the risk of children being upset, threatening suicide, or disturbed for not having their child-determined gender affirmed, the choice is simple. Combined with the financial value to Big Pharma, which invests in Lofgren through campaign donations and investments her husband makes on their behalf, she hopes Latinos will vote for her to ensure her influence in the Big Pharma realm.

Latinos have every reason to vote in this primary on March 5.

Many opportunities lie in the areas where the Latinos currently occupy. This is ripe for new development and an elegant gentrification led by Big Tech and Big Pharma in the southern part of the new district.

Proud activists envision, with Lofgren at the helm, multi-billion dollar opportunities with the Susan Ellen Zoe Lofgren Inclusive Gender Transition Corridor [SEZLIGT], where young people from around the world can come to the newly repurposed and gentrified Salinas Valley for gender transitioning.

SEZLIGT would cater to adolescents and mature-for-their-age children for gender transitioning.

The corridor would include medical treatment that consists of both hormone therapy and genital and breast removal and mental health therapy by professionals who encourage children to decide and not look back.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: JANUARY 6 HEARINGS WERE A SHAMEFUL EPISODE IN HISTORY

Dear Editor,

Zoe Lofgren's role in the January 6 hearings has intensified fears among conservatives and raised serious questions about the protection of our First Amendment rights.

It was deeply troubling to witness Rep. Lofgren actively participating in hearings that seemed more focused on criminalizing political dissent rather than seeking genuine accountability. While it is rightful to condemn the incidences of violence that may have occurred on January 6, it is essential to distinguish between the individuals who engaged in criminal acts and the larger group of peaceful protesters exercising their constitutional right to free speech.

By perpetuating the narrative that associates all conservatives with the reprehensible actions of a few, Rep. Lofgren has contributed to the erosion of trust and unity in our society. Rather than facilitating a fair and impar-

tial investigation, her actions have fostered division and polarized public opinion.

Labeling political dissent as criminal behavior is deeply concerning. Every American has the right to express their disagreements with the government and voice their concerns without the fear of being criminalized. However, Rep. Lofgren's involvement in the hearings has cast a chilling effect on political discourse by suggesting that expressing dissenting viewpoints could potentially lead to legal repercussions.

The ramifications of Rep. Lofgren's actions extend far beyond the context of the January 6 hearings. By positioning herself as a proponent of unchecked government power, she has set a dangerous precedent that could be misused in the future to curtail the rights and freedoms of American citizens.

Civil liberties and the preservation of the First Amendment are core to America. Rep.

Lofgren's actions run counter to these fundamental principles. Instead of fostering an environment where all voices are heard and respected, she has undermined the very essence of our democratic values.

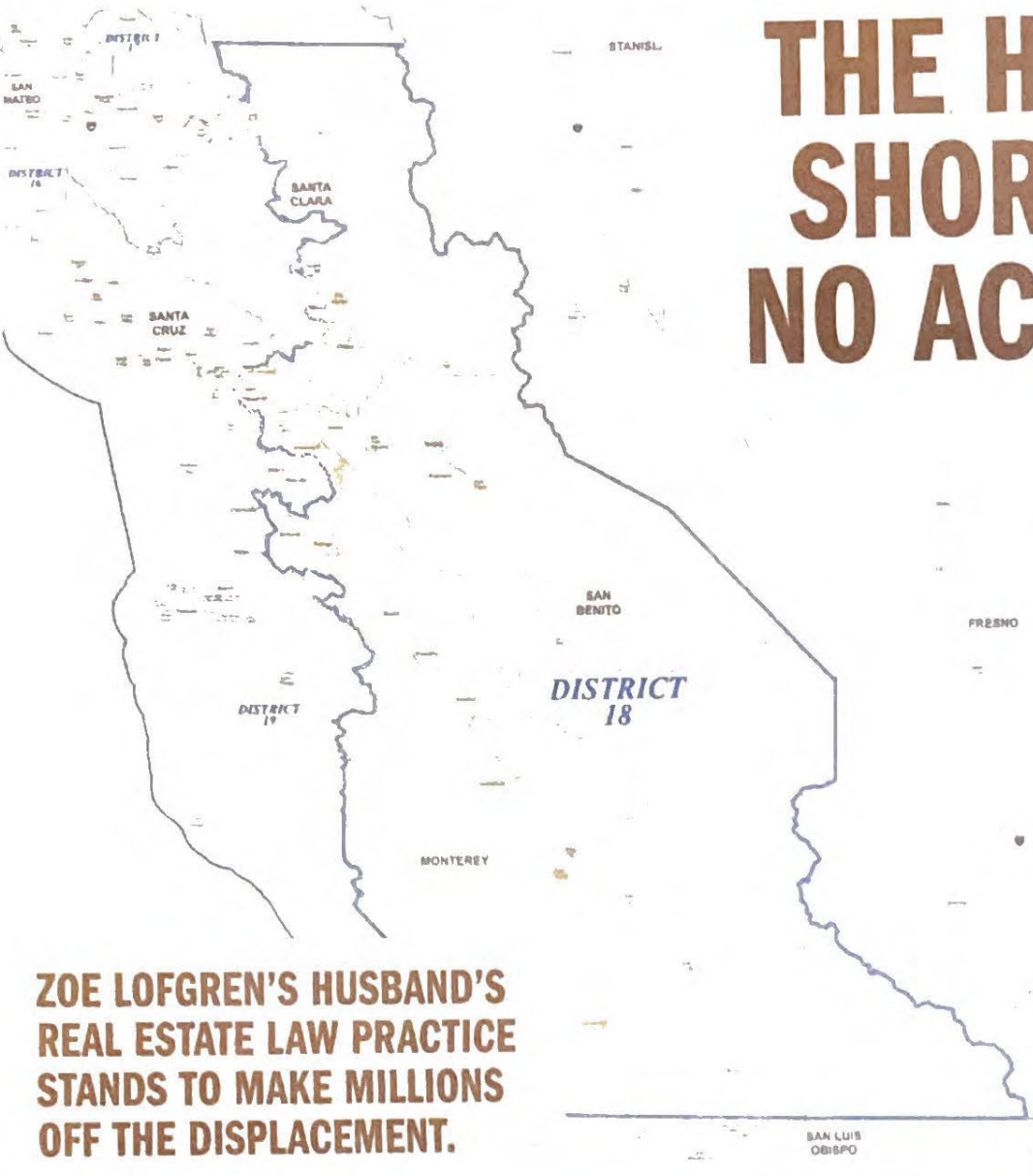
It is crucial that we hold our elected officials accountable for their actions. I urge Rep. Lofgren to reconsider her approach and prioritize safeguarding the rights and liberties of all Americans, irrespective of their political leanings. Our democracy thrives when diverse perspectives are freely expressed and debated. Vilifying political dissent and weaponizing the justice system only serves to further divide our nation.

The damage caused by Rep. Lofgren's actions threatens the integrity of the First Amendment and civil liberties norms for millions of Americans. It is imperative that we remain vigilant and actively challenge any attempts to silence dissenting voices or criminalize political differences.

Sincerely,

Bradley Wong, 46
Alum Rock





THE HOUSING SHORTAGE IS NO ACCIDENT.

IT'S AN INTENTIONAL
ETHNIC CLEANSING
CREATED BY ELITIST
MUNICIPAL ZONING
LAWS THAT ARE
INTENDED TO PUSH
WORKING CLASS
LATINOS, FILLIPINOS,
AND VIETNAMESE
RESIDNETS OUT OF SAN
JOSE, AND OUT OF THE
REGION.

ZOE LOFGREN'S HUSBAND'S
REAL ESTATE LAW PRACTICE
STANDS TO MAKE MILLIONS
OFF THE DISPLACEMENT.

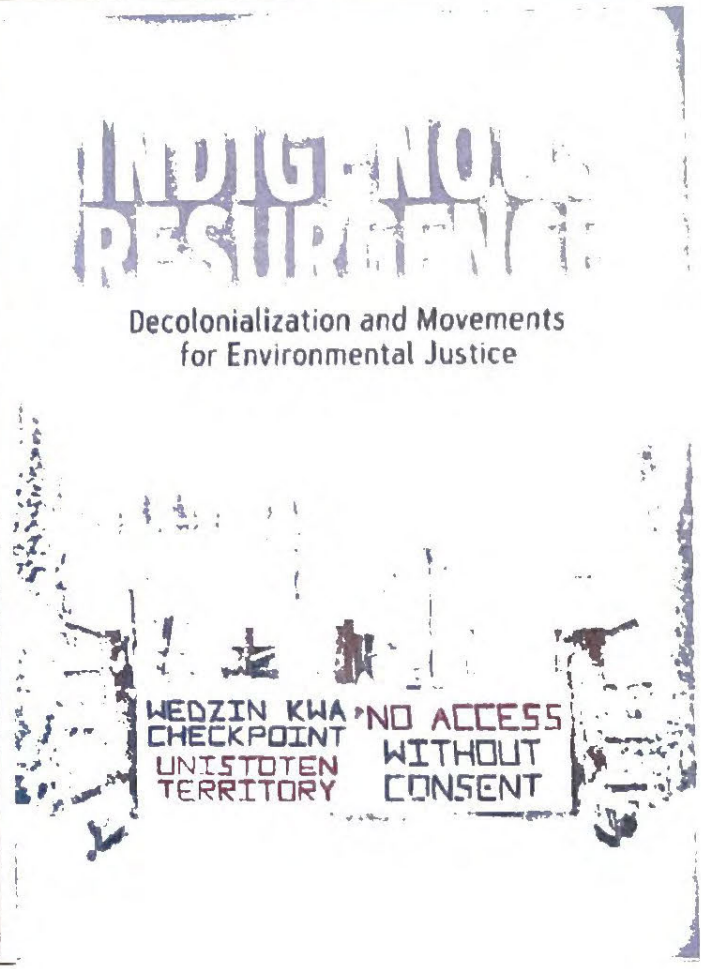
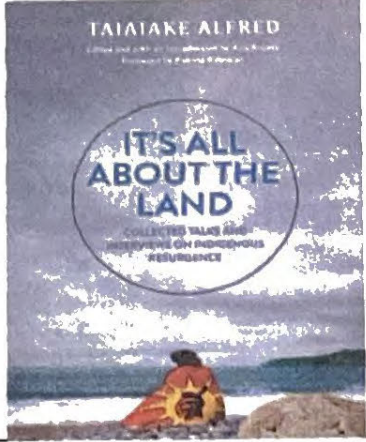
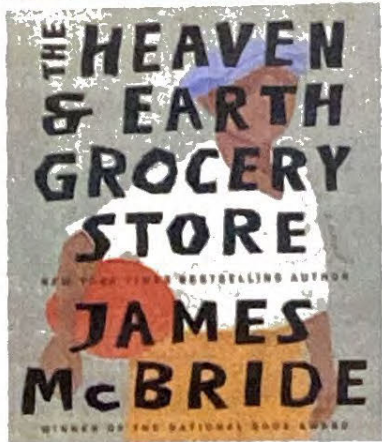
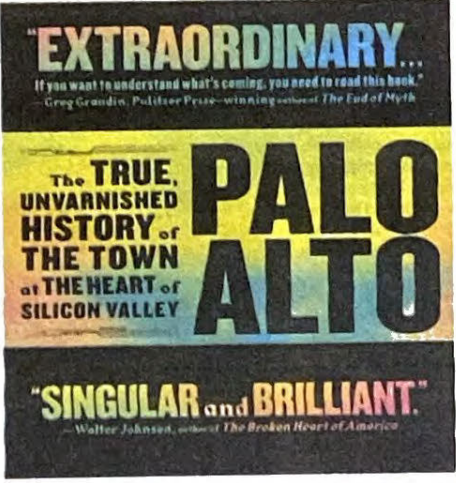
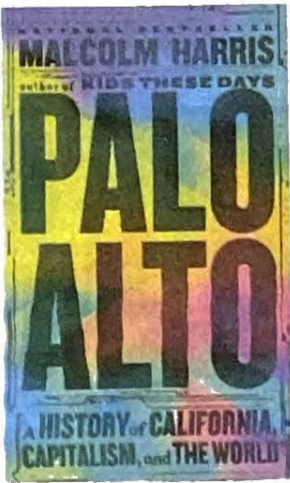


EXHIBIT C

PATRIOTS!

DON'T VOTE FOR PETER HERNANDEZ!



It's statistically impossible for a Republican to win the 18th congressional district. But a moderate Democrat will send Zoe Lofgren packing!

Scan to read Roger Stone's message to Republican voters in the 18th district:

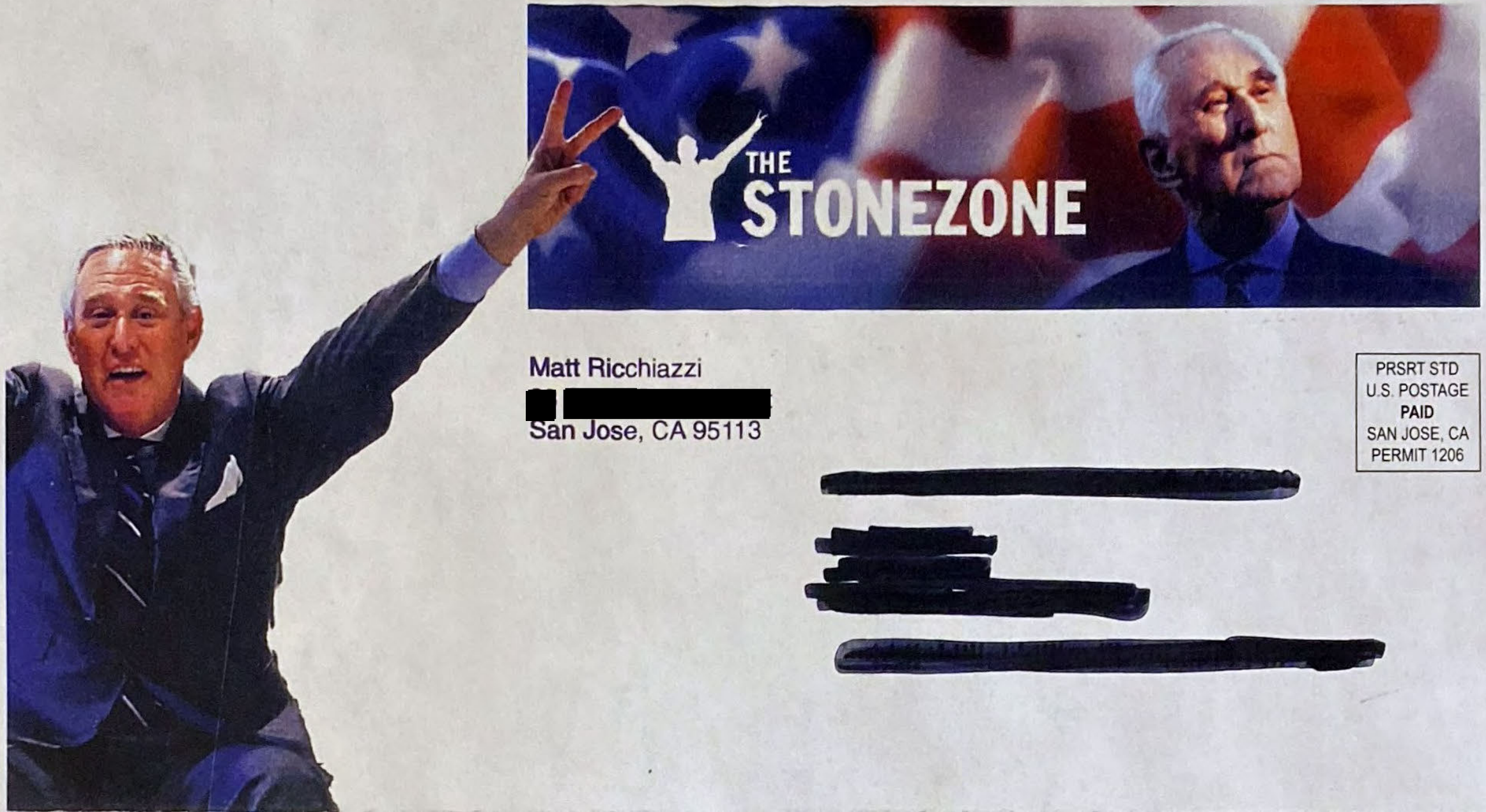


SCAN ME

"Zoe Lofgren is an absolutely vile human being."

PAID FOR BY MATT RICCHIAZZI

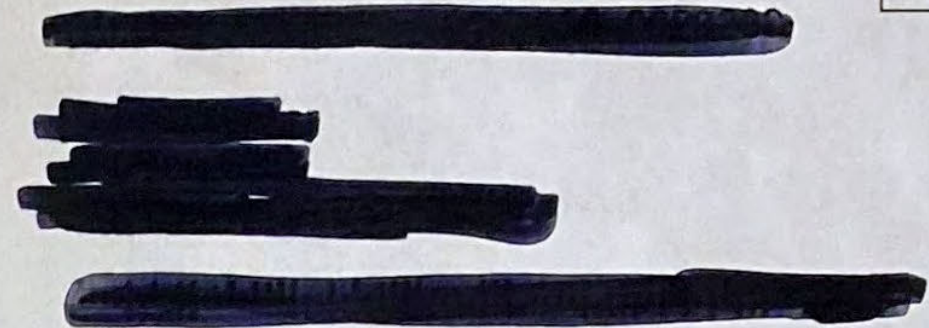
ENCLOSED IS A TOP SECRET MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF ROGER STONE



Matt Ricchiazzi

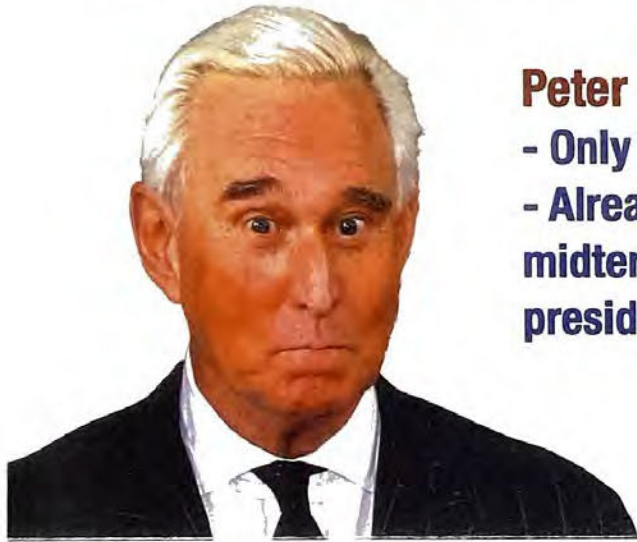
San Jose, CA 95113

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THIS MESSAGE IS TOP SECRET - DO NOT SHARE WITH NON-REPUBLICANS

In a psycho-liberal state like California, Republican voters are forced to think strategically. If you want to oust a crooked incumbent, you often need a Democrat to get through the jungle primary in order to have a competitive choice in November.



Peter is a great guy, but he just can't win:
 - Only 19% GOP enrollment in the 18th district
 - Already lost 35% to 66% to Lofgren during the midterms, when GOP turnout is higher than presidential election years

It's just statistics.



This is why I'm calling on GOP voters to back Charlene Concepción Nijmeh on March 5th.

Zoe Lofgren is a repulsive human being:

- Suffers from Trump Derangement Syndrome
- Sham 'Impeachment Manager' against Trump twice
- January 6 hoax committee member that sent law abiding innocent people to prison
- Big Tech's 'Madam' on Capitol Hill
- Refuses to regulate Big Tech and supports the censorship industrial complex



Lord help us if Lofgren becomes Chair of the Science & Tech Committee. There will be no First Amendment rights left.

EXHIBIT D

Uno de nosotros luchando para nosotros.

“Charlene has a bold plan to make housing affordable again, and to end the national housing shortage that is causing rents to skyrocket,”

- Watsonville Mayor Rebecca Garcia



Charlene for Congress 2024
18 South 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95113



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Charlene Concepción Nijmeh

**DEMOCRAT
FOR CONGRESS**



The only candidate in the race who:

- Rejects Corporate PAC money
- Refuses to own stock while in Congress
- Will donate her salary to those in need



"I believe in term limits, age limits, and public service -- not career politicians."

**TRIBAL CHAIRWOMAN · ENVIRONMENTALIST · BUSINESSWOMAN · MOTHER OF FIVE
HOUSING ACTIVIST · TEXTILE RECYCLER · LIFELONG DEMOCRAT · PRO-PEACE**

PAID FOR BY CHARLENE FOR CONGRESS 2024

The choice couldn't be more clear.



Charlene Concepción Nijmeh

Lifelong Democrat



Zoe Lofgren

Big Tech Puppet & Rabid Partisan



Hernandez

Flip Flopping Republican

Housing Crisis	Proposes building more than 6 million new homes in 5 years, to reduce rents by increasing the housing supply.	No federal housing strategy. Zoe supports racist exclusionary zoning laws that send rents skyrocketing.	Will eliminate Section 8 housing vouchers and destroy our open space.
Big Tech and Kids	Paywall all pornography online , require parental consent to use social media, and require removal of revenge porn .	Ranking Member of the Tech & Antitrust Committees, and has allowed Big Tech to run amuck.	Has no plans to reign in Big Tech's victimization of our children.
War and Peace	Will prevent WW3 by refusing to fund any war that is not declared by Congress, as required by the Constitution.	Zoe is letting Joe Biden bomb several countries without Congress having declared war.	Supports turbo-charging the bombing campaign across the Middle East.
Party Loyalty	Lifelong Democrat who is ashamed of the Party's performance, and is running to oust current hyper-partisan leadership.	A relentless partisan responsible for a toxic culture of bullying and special interest corruption.	Now a Trumpster after being a Never Trumper, as the winds blow.
Ethics & Service	Will donate salary to support those in need. Refuses corporate PAC money. Will not own stocks while in Congress.	Takes more money from Big Tech than anyone in Congress, and was caught insider trading.	Plans to trade stocks and take corporate PAC money in Congress

Neighbors and friends,

My name is **Charlene Concepción Nijmeh**. I've been very blessed. Fifteen years ago I started a textile recycling company that now diverts 60 million pounds of waste from landfills every year, while creating a source of affordable clothing in Latin America. I've created 6,000 jobs across 123 second hand clothing stores, and 100% of everything we collect is either resold or reprocessed into building materials -- nothing goes into a landfill.

I'm so proud that I've been able to do well by doing good for the environment.

I became Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe six years ago. I never aspired to run for Congress, but in January 2023, Rep. Zoe Lofgren demanded that I sign away the rights and freedom's of my Tribe's children in exchange for legislation. At the urging of my Council I rejected that extortionate demand.

Now I'm running for Congress to fight for anyone who has ever felt unseen, unheard, or unrecognized by your federal government.

One of us to fight for us.

“Charlene has a bold plan to make housing affordable again, and to end the national housing shortage that is causing rents to skyrocket,”

- Watsonville Mayor Rebecca Garcia



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Charlene Concepción Nijmeh

**DEMOCRAT
FOR CONGRESS**



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EXHIBIT E

Charlene for Congress
18 S 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95113

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**As a private citizen, Charlene has created 6,000 jobs and
diverts more than 60 million pounds of textile waste from
landfills every year.**

**Imagine what she will get
done, working for you.**



ONE OF US TO FIGHT FOR US

Charlene Nijmeh FOR CONGRESS

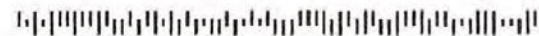
DYNAMIC TRIBAL PRESIDENT
INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEUR
LEADING ENVIRONMENTALIST

44 YEAR CAREER
POLITICIAN



Charlene for Congress
18 S 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95113

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Como ciudadana privada, Charlene ha creado 6.000 puestos de trabajo y desvía más de 60 millones de libras de desechos textiles de los vertederos cada año.



Imagínate lo que podría lograr si es electa. Ella trabajará por ti y para ti.



Charlene Concepción Nijmeh
Candidata al Congreso

Uno de nosotros para luchar por nosotros.
Una tradición de servicio.



Charlene Nijmeh **PARA EL CONGRESO**

**PRESIDENTA TRIBAL DINÁMICA
EMPRESARIA INNOVADORA
AMBIENTALISTA LÍDER**

**POLÍTICA DE CARRERA
DE 44 AÑOS**

