



City of Huntington Park Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Huntington Park Statement Regarding Council Vacancy Litigation

HUNTINGTON PARK, CA —The City of Huntington Park acknowledges the recent court decision restraining the Council's efforts to promptly fill the vacant seat previously held by Esmeralda Castillo. We respect the judicial process and will fully comply with the court's orders for as long as they remain in effect.

This case centers on difficult but necessary action taken by the Council in accordance with longstanding residency requirements for elected officials. The decision to declare the seat vacant was not made lightly, but rather in the interest of upholding the integrity of our local government and ensuring our residents are represented by officials who meet all legal qualifications. Under Cal. Gov't Code § 36502(a) and Huntington Park Municipal Code § 2-9.02(a), a councilmember's office becomes vacant immediately when that individual ceases to reside within the city. These provisions are foundational to ensure that those elected to serve remain active members of the community they represent.

Council's decision was supported by multiple sources of evidence obtained through independent investigation, including surveillance, documentary evidence, and witness interviews. Further details regarding the city's investigation are set forth in our recent court filings, copies of which may be accessed [here](#).

We recognize Ms. Castillo's right to contest the vacancy in her former office. Equally important, however, is the city's duty to uphold the law, protect the integrity of its institutions, and maintain public confidence in local governance. As the court proceedings continue, the city remains focused on fulfilling its duties to the residents of Huntington Park and ensuring a fair and lawful resolution. We will provide updates as appropriate and encourage our residents to stay engaged and informed.

Clarifications Regarding Recent Media Coverage

In light of recent reporting, the City of Huntington Park offers the following clarifications:

- Ms. Esmeralda Castillo has not been barred from attending City Council meetings. She has continued to be present at several meetings since the Council declared her seat vacant and remains welcome to participate as a member of the public.
- The complaint filed by Ms. Castillo did not contain any allegations of sexual harassment. Any reports suggesting otherwise are inaccurate.
- Concerns regarding Ms. Castillo's residency were first brought to the City's attention in September 2024 through public complaints—not initiated by the Council nor City staff. As noted in court documents, Ms. Castillo did not file her complaint with Human Resources until January 6, 2025.
- The Huntington Park Police Department assumed control of the investigation on December 22, 2024, after receiving a formal briefing regarding the nature of the allegations and supporting documentation.

These clarifications are provided in the interest of transparency and to ensure the public has accurate information as this legal process moves forward. For additional information, please contact the Communications and Community Relations department office at (323) 582-6161.