

City of Arts & Innovation

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT COMPLAINT

Riverside Municipal Code Chapter 2.78

A Public Document

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AUG 24 2021

City of Riverside
City Clerk's Office

1. Person filing complaint:

Name SELMA KELLY Email ocbeach949@gmail.com
 Address 17633 MOUNTAIN VIEW RD., DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92241
 Phone 760-993-1373

2. Official who committed alleged violation:

Name 1. COUNCILMAN RONALDO FIERRO
 2. COUNCILWOMAN CLARRISA CERVANTES
 Position 3. MAYOR PRO TEM GABY PLASCENCIA
 4. MAYOR PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON

3. Date(s) of alleged violation: JULY 15 -- JULY 17, 2021

4. Date you became aware of alleged violation SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2021

Complaints shall be filed with the City Clerk within 180 calendar days of discovery of an alleged violation, but in no event later than three (3) years from the date of the alleged violation.


5. Specific Prohibited Conduct Section of Code of Ethics and Conduct allegedly violated:

- Use of Official Title or Position for Personal Gain Prohibited
- Use or Divulgence of Confidential or Privileged Information Prohibited
- Use of City Resources for Non-City Purposes Prohibited
- Advocacy of Private Interests of Third Parties in Certain Circumstances Prohibited
- Endorsements for Compensation Prohibited
- Violation of Government Code Sections 87100 et seq., Prohibited (Conflict of Interest)
- Certain Political Activity Prohibited (Coercion of City employees to participate in election activities)
- Display of Campaign Materials in or on City Vehicles Prohibited
- Knowingly Assisting Another Public Official in Violating This Code of Ethics and Conduct Prohibited
- Negotiation for Employment With Any Party Having a Matter Pending Before City Prohibited
- Ex Parte Contact in Quasi-Judicial Matters Prohibited
- Attempts to Coerce Official Duties Prohibited
- Violations of Federal, State, or Local Law Prohibited

8. Attach copies of any and all documents, photographs, recordings, or other tangible materials to be introduced and considered at the hearing.

Witnesses, documents, photographs, recordings or other tangible materials, other than those submitted with the complaint or official's reply, shall not be introduced at the hearing or considered by the hearing panel, except upon a finding by the hearing panel that the discovery of the evidence came to the awareness of the proponent after the filing of the complaint or reply and that the proponent disclosed such information to the City Clerk as soon as practicable after becoming aware of its existence. However, the hearing panel may subpoena additional witnesses, documents, photographs, recordings and other tangible evidence to be introduced and considered.

9. Signed under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California:



Signature

August 24, 2021

Date

PLEASE NOTE: The burden of proof is on the complainant and the complainant must prove the violation by a preponderance of the evidence.

Failure to complete all sections of this form may result in the filing being deemed incomplete and the complainant will be so notified. Incomplete filings will not be processed.

File completed form and attachments:

Office of the City Clerk
City of Riverside
3900 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92522
951-826-5557
city_clerk@riversideca.gov

Selma C. Kelly

17633 Mountain View Rd., Desert Hot Springs, CA 92241
Tel. 760-993-1373 / Em. ocbeach949@gmail.com

August 4, 2021

Attention: The Board of Ethics
City of Riverside
C/o Clerk of the Board
3900 Main Street, 7th Floor
Riverside, CA 92522

Michael A. Hestrin
Riverside County District Attorney
3960 Orange St.
Riverside, CA 92501

Jerry Yang -- U.S. Attorney
United States Attorney's Office
Riverside Branch Office
3403 Tenth Street, Suite 200
Riverside, California 92501

Phaedra Norton—City Attorney
City of Riverside
C/o: Phil Pitchford
Public Information Officer
Email. ppitchford@riversideca.gov

COMPLAINT AGAINST CITY OF RIVERSIDE OFFICIALS

- 1. COUNCILMAN RONALDO FIERRO**
- 2. COUNCILWOMAN CLARRISA CERVANTES**
- 3. MAYOR PRO TEM GABY PLASCENCIA**
- 4. MAYOR PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON**

**SUBJECT: CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST RIVERSIDE COUNTY
CONSERVATIVE CITIZEN TAX-PAYERS**

**EVENT: THE MATT GAETZ / MARJORY GREEN “AMERICA FIRST RALLY”
LOCATION: RIVERSIDE CITY CONVENTION CENTER
DATE: JULY 17, 2021**

**** Copies were emailed to the elected officials named above.**

Complaint by: Selma Kelly Against: Riverside City

Good Morning:

Attached on the following pages are excerpts from the ACLU's website---"Know Your Rights"---citing the many landmark Supreme Court decisions concerning the use of public facilities, free speech, equal rights and protections, which apply to what happened in the City of Riverside on July 17, 2021.

My name is Selma Kelly. I'm a property owner and tax-payer in Desert Hot Springs, CA. I'm a Registered Independent, not beholden to any particular party.

This is a complaint against City Councilmembers Ronaldo Fierro, Clarissa Cervantes, Pro Tem Mayor Gaby Plascencia and Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson.

The above elected officials worked actively to cancel a rally that was to be held at the Riverside City Convention Center on Saturday, July 17, 2021, hosted by Congressmen Matt Gaetz and Marjory Taylor-Green---actions we believe were unlawful.

The City pays contractor Raincross \$500,000 a year to operate the convention center with our tax dollars. 45% of tax-payers in Riverside County are Conservatives. This means, 45% of our tax dollars are being used to fund, operate, maintain, police and enjoy the "public use" of the convention center. In fact, without our 45% revenue, the County would completely collapse.

As such, we believe the named elected officials violated our civil rights by working against it ahead of time to shut the rally down. While helping themselves to our county-wide tax dollars, they refused us the equal access and enjoyment of a public facility we are entitled to.

On Saturday, July 17, 2021, Republican Congressmen Matt Gaetz and Marjory Taylor-Green booked the Riverside City Convention Center to hold the 'America First Rally.'

Instead of allowing our group access to the publicly-funded convention center (or at least 45% of it), the aforementioned officials "worked overtime" to shut it down.

Complaint by: Selma Kelly Against: Riverside City

Councilman Ronaldo Fierro.

Fierro told the Press-Enterprise Newspaper (PE) that the council is prohibited from canceling an event.

“The Riverside City Council does not have the legal ability to stop or cancel the booking of this event,” Fierro said.

But then, he told the PE that he did in fact take adverse action against it:

Fierro wrote in an emailed statement on July 15th, “The hateful and racist rhetoric **THAT WILL BE** perpetrated at this event by these two, well-known extremists has absolutely no place in our City.” *Emphasis added.*

Notice the phrase “will be.” This means he “worked” to shut down the rally days earlier, by emailing inflammatory rhetoric to constituents against our group, while telling the press he was legally prohibited from doing so.

Councilwoman Clarissa Cervantes.

Clarissa Cervantes told the PE she was “shocked and disappointed” when she learned about the event, two days before. In fact, she called for an emergency City Council meeting “to address the matter.”

She said, “The community should have been informed well in advance about who was coming to Riverside to speak at a **city-owned facility**,” and that her biggest concern was that the event could threaten public safety.

Yes, Clarissa, we agree. Public safety is a concern. Black Lives Matter/Antifa MURDERED twenty-six (26) people last summer. On June 2, 2020, retired St. Louis police chief David Dorn was shot in the head during a “peaceful protest” and bled to death on the street.

Sixteen days later on June 18th, Kamala Harris said, “The protests will go on and should go on!” One month after Harris’ remarks, 8-year old, Black Atlanta child, Secoriea Turner, was shot and killed on July 5, 2020, because her mother took a wrong turn into a “peaceful protest.” Not satisfied with the various murders

around the country, Kamala Harris then issued tweets asking people to send money to bail out the “peaceful protesters.”

Perhaps Clarissa would like challenge us on whose party is more violent? (We have over 200 violent, riot videos ready to go!)

Cervantes objected to Gaetz and Greene’s message. “This is not aligned with our core values of diversity and inclusion,” she said.

Cervantes said she then called for yet another council meeting. “To review its arrangement with Raincross”---the contractor who operates the center on behalf of the City.

Cervantes did this “to ensure” 45% of conservative tax-payers would never be allowed access to the publicly-funded facility ever again. Right---Clarissa ??

Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson.

RCPD Officer Ryan Railsback said the department had no knowledge of rally-related death threats. Spokesman for the center, Scott Megna, said his office had no problems with the rally.

“Raincross welcomes clients and guests with diverse opinions and beliefs and does not discriminate against groups who wish to hold lawful events at the center,” Megna said. “Views and opinions expressed by clients and guests are theirs alone.”

This proves Raincross and RCPD had nothing to do with shutting down the rally, so it must have been someone inside Riverside City Council.

After the rally was shut down, Dawson said, “I recognize this was a divisive issue in our community, and I am glad it has been resolved.”

We emailed Raincross on Tuesday, August 3rd and asked who told the center to cancel it. We received no reply.

Mayor Dawson should have understood that conservatives have a right to the publicly-funded convention center, but took the hysterical route instead

Mayor Pro Tem Gaby Plascencia.

Plascencia said, "I am disappointed we even got to this point, because these speakers are the antithesis of everything Riverside stands for."

Plascencia is totally oblivious to the citizens who pay half the taxes here. Plascencia also moved to fire a Planner who was a volunteer. Although she agreed he did good work, she wanted to replace him because, "there is not enough diversity here in the council" ---and she says this in the first minute of her speech.

See it here: <https://youtu.be/LZ7fGVED9ho>

In other words, she wanted to remove him because he is white. She made other allegations against him, which he later refuted.

State Legislator Mark Takano.

Not part of this complaint but equally involved, State Legislator Mark Takano actually used 'free speech' to applaud the cancelation of the rally:

"Freedom of speech is a fundamental human right engrained in the Constitution. Riversiders have proudly exercised this right to make it known loud and clear that Rep. Matt Gaetz and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene are not welcome to promote their hateful rhetoric in our community," Takano said. "I am thankful for the tireless work of those who stepped up and spoke out against this rally and what it would have represented."

Tisa Rodriguez, Riverside County Democratic Party Chairwoman.

Rodriguez said her party will put out a call to peacefully protest the rally. "The rally is extremely offensive because the stances they take are people who literally live and work in our community," Rodriguez said. "Having people like this who create targets out of our citizens is not a healthy thing for finding real peace."

Ms. Rodriguez errs in that President Trump, his voters, Gaetz and Green ever said anything against "actual citizens."

The officials here are acting like *The Borg*, as though they alone live here and control the HiveMind ... but have no problem collecting our money.

And now for the fun part!

Let's pretend we conservatives are RACIST, toothless, inbred, ignorant, fascist, Nazi, homophobic, KKK provocateurs.

And you'd like to run us out of town!

Okay, let's see what the U.S. Supreme Court has to say ...

FROM THE ACLU'S WEBSITE:

<https://www.aclunc.org/our-work/know-your-rights>

LANDMARK U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

1. ACLU's Comments on Public Venues:

Designated Public Forums: Once the government treats a public venue as available to some for non-commercial speech, it must be made available to all. Common examples of designated public forums include public auditoriums ... The government cannot discriminate based on viewpoint, even in a non-public forum. The government can't deny a permit just because past demonstrations by a group or others ended in civil disobedience or a disorderly brawl. Likewise, officials can't ask you to promise that protesters will obey the law before agreeing to issue your permit.

2. **Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969)**

Hamilton County, Ohio, 1969. At issue were firearms, cross-burnings, and the promise of vengeance against “niggers and Jews” as just a few features of the Ku Klux Klan Rally that landed KKK spokesperson Clarence Brandenburg a conviction for advocating violence under Ohio’s Criminal Syndication Statute. And then, the U.S. Supreme Court weighed in.

Result: The Court struck down Brandenburg’s conviction, holding it unconstitutional to punish the abstract advocacy of violence or law-breaking. The Justices cemented into law a new test for seditious speech: that it must be “directed to inciting or producing *imminent* lawless action and is *likely* to incite or produce such action.”

Okay so, this is nuts !! If the Supreme Court didn’t consider the KKK’s promise of revenge against “N’s and Jews” as a prelude to violence, how do you justify shutting down Gaetz/Green’s freedom of speech?

2. **National Socialist Party of America v. Village of Skokie, 432 U.S. 43 (1977)**

Local officials knew trouble was brewing when the American Nazi Party sought a permit to march through Skokie, where thousands of Holocaust survivors lived. Skokie officials passed an ordinance banning the dissemination of materials and wearing swastikas that promoted hatred based on race or religion.

Result: The ACLU represented the Nazis at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Wait ... what ??

In a historic affirmation of the First Amendment’s prohibition against government restriction of speech based on message or ideas, the federal court of appeals invalidated Skokie’s ordinances, ruling that: “If these civil rights are to remain vital for all, they must protect not only those society deems acceptable, but also those whose ideas it quite justifiably rejects and despises.”

Concerned Women for America, Inc. v. Lafayette County, 883 F.2d 32 (5th Cir. 1989):

Lafayette [Public] County Library had permitted various groups to use its auditorium, thereby creating a designated public forum. Thus, the Library could not deny access to groups whose meetings had political or religious content. Such a denial could not apply to the subject matter of the speech.

R.A.V. v. St. Paul, 505 U.S. 377, 112 S.Ct. 2538, 120 L.Ed.2d. 305 (1992)

St. Paul, Minnesota passed an ordinance that banned "hate speech" and any expression, such as a burning cross or wearing swastikas, that might arouse anger, alarm, or resentment in others on the basis of race, color, religion, or gender.

Result: The Supreme Court struck the ordinance down as unconstitutional discrimination based on the content of expression: the law banned only fighting words that insult based on race, religion, or gender, while abusive invective aimed at someone on the basis of **political affiliation** or sexual orientation would be permissible. The law thus reflected only the city's special hostility toward certain biases and not others, which is what the First Amendment forbids.

Whitney v. California, 274 U.S. 357, 375 (1927)

What if others react violently to what we say? You can't be held responsible for the way counter-demonstrators or your own supporters react, as long as your words don't directly incite violence or law-breaking. It's the responsibility of the police to control the crowd. Fear of serious injury cannot alone justify suppression of free speech and assembly. To justify suppression of free speech there must be reasonable grounds to fear that serious evil will result if free speech is practiced ... that the danger apprehended is imminent ..."

Cohen v. California, 403 U.S. 15 (1971)

Paul Robert Cohen walked through a courthouse with "Fuck the Draft" written on his jacket. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County convicted him of disturbing the peace. Cohen charged the court with violating his First Amendment rights.

Result: The U.S. Supreme Court overturned Cohen’s conviction. “A voice cannot be muzzled to protect a [courthouse] audience,” the SC justices wrote. “We cannot indulge in the facile assumption that one can forbid particular words without a substantial risk of suppressing ideas in the process. SURELY THE STATE HAS NO RIGHT TO CLEANSE PUBLIC DEBATE to the point where it is grammatically palatable to the most squeamish among us.”

Forsyth County, Georgia v. Nationalist Movement, 505 U.S. 123 (1992)

Racially charged Forsyth County had a history of violent demonstrations. In 1987, confrontations between civil rights marchers and rock-throwing Nationalists catapulted police protection costs to over \$670,000, so the county enacted an ordinance requiring permit applicants to pay in advance for police protection and instructed county administrators to set the amount. The Nationalist Movement filed suit, protesting the \$100 fee levied for a proposed march when they protested the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday.

Result: The Supreme Court held that it was unconstitutional to permit an administrator to examine the content of the message and the likely [violent] reaction, and to vary the fee based on the estimated cost of maintaining public order. Capping the fee at \$1,000, the justices said, did not render the ordinance valid.

Continued Narrative From the ACLU Website ...

Equal Protection refers to the idea that a governmental body may not deny people equal protection of its governing laws. The governing body state must treat an individual in the same manner as others in similar conditions and circumstances.

Equal protection forces a state to govern impartially—not draw distinctions between individuals solely on differences that are irrelevant to a legitimate governmental objective. Thus, the equal protection clause is crucial to the protection of civil rights.

Your right to express your opinion is protected no matter what beliefs you hold.

What matters is *how* you use that right. If you organize a protest that causes serious disruption, the government may be able to intervene. Except for a few notable exceptions, nobody can restrict your rights simply because they don't like what you say.

Young or old; anarchist or evangelical; pacifist or hawk; Mormon or Muslim; these rights apply to *everyone*. It doesn't matter whether you're a U.S. citizen, of voting age, or whether you speak English. Free-speech rights are for *everybody*.

*****End*****

REMEDIES SOUGHT AGAINST:

- 1. COUNCILMAN RONALDO FIERRO**
- 2. COUNCILWOMAN CLARRISA CERVANTES**
- 3. MAYOR PROTEM GABY PLASCENCIA**
- 4. MAYOR PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON**

The California State Attorney General's office and its sub-division, the Civil Rights Enforcement Section, claims they are committed to strong and vigorous enforcement of federal and state civil rights laws, from local officials to the very top of those in authority.

However, we are not confident that any authority in California will give a rat's ass about what happened in Riverside City on July 17th. In fact, you'll even try to ignore settled Supreme Court rulings and pretend they don't apply to Conservatives ... you know ... stuff like ...

- The government cannot discriminate based on viewpoint in a public forum;
- The government can't deny a permit just because past demonstrations by your group or others ended in civil disobedience or a disorderly brawl;

Complaint by: Selma Kelly Against: Riverside City

- Civil rights are to remain vital for all, even those who are despicable;
- The First Amendment forbids cities to harbor biases against certain groups;
- Fear of serious injury cannot justify suppression of free speech and assembly.

Further, the City of Riverside's own Charter of Ethics mandates the following:

RC Code of Ethics 2.78.050. Core Values.

B. To strive to make decisions that are **unbiased, fair, and honest**. The public officials of the City of Riverside shall aspire to ensure that their decisions are **unbiased, fair, and honest**. They shall strive to avoid participation in all decisions which create a real or perceived conflict of interest and to disclose any personal interest that could be perceived to be in conflict with the fair and impartial exercise of their responsibilities.

C. To strive to ensure that **everyone is treated with respect** and in a **just and fair manner**. The public officials of the City of Riverside have a responsibility to make **extraordinary attempts** to treat all people in a manner which would be considered just and fair. **They shall strive to value and encourage input from members of the community and encourage open and free discussion of public issues**. They shall strive to have all persons treated with respect as they come before the body on which they serve. **They shall aspire to create an atmosphere of genuine interest in the point of view expressed by members of the community even if it differs from their own.** [Pause for laughter]

D. To strive to create a community that **affirms the value of diversity**. The public officials of the City of Riverside shall aspire to recognize and **affirm the value of all persons**, families, and communities within the City of Riverside. They will encourage full participation of all persons and groups, be aware and observe important celebrations and events which reflect the values of the City's diverse population, and provide assistance for those who find it difficult to participate due to language barriers or disabilities.

F. To strive to maintain a nonpartisan and civic minded local government. The public officials of the City of Riverside shall affirm the value of a nonpartisan council-manager form of government.

2.78.100 - Enforcement and Sanctions.

Upon a finding by a majority of the City Council that any public official violated any provision of the Prohibited Conduct section of this chapter, the City Council may impose any of the following sanctions:

A. Elected Officials.

1. Public apology by the official to the complainant;
2. Recommendation for training;
3. Removal from regional committees;
4. Removal from Mayor Pro Tem rotation;
5. Public censure;
6. Restrict from traveling to attend meetings or conferences outside the City limits.

Fierro, Cervantes, Plascencia and Lock Dawson worked against the rally to shut it down, even though they are prohibited from doing so. Hence, I'm filing this complaint over the violation of our civil rights.

In closing, I'd like to say that I'm surprised, with so many Leftists in local government, that we're not yet surrounded by people pulling their pants down to defecate in public, as in San Francisco, Portland and Seattle.

Love also what you've done at the border, which DHS Director Mayorkas said last week in a leaked audio is, quote: "Unsustainable." No face covers, no distancing, no tests and vaccines, with 40% of immigrants infected with Covid. Meantime, Newsom, Pelosi, DeBlasio and Obama throw super-spreaders which no one dares talk about. Right? Seems like you Leftists have lost the right to preach about anything!

Please let us know what, if anything, will be done about this.

S. Kelly

Selma C. Kelly

Complaint by: Selma Kelly Against: Riverside City



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Riverside rally with Matt Gaetz, Marjorie Taylor Greene canceled



The Riverside Convention Center was set to host an America First Rally headlined by Republican U.S. Reps. Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene on Saturday night, July 17, 2021. News of the rally sparked outrage and calls to cancel the event from critics who say Gaetz and Greene are liars who spread hate. Late Friday, July 16, 2021, the city announced it has been canceled. (File photo by Kurt Miller, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | jhorseman@scng.com and **DAVID DOWNEY** | ddowney@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: July 16, 2021 at 3:09 p.m. | UPDATED: July 17, 2021 at 8:16 a.m.

Update: [Late Friday night, the rally was again moved to Orange County – this time to the Anaheim Event Center.](#)

A Riverside political rally that was to feature two controversial members of Congress was canceled late Friday, July 16 – about 24 hours before it was set to begin.

The abrupt cancellation capped a day filled with outrage and demands to cancel the event as well as plans to protest the planned appearance of Republican Reps. Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene [in an “America First” rally at the Riverside Convention Center.](#)

City officials reported late Friday they were notified by operators of the convention center that the rally planned for Saturday evening, July 17, won't take place.

A “candlelight vigil for den
front of Riverside City Hall
Riverside officials express



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for 7 p.m. Saturday in

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Mayor Patricia Lock

“I recognize this was a divi
Dawson said, commending the operator in a statement.

“Riverside is a diverse and inclusive community, so it is heartening to hear that this event will not move forward,”
Mayor Pro Tem Gaby Plascencia said. “I am disappointed we even got to this point, because these speakers are the
antithesis of everything Riverside stands for.”

Earlier Friday, while a Riverside city councilman sympathized with the rally’s opponents, he said the city did not have
the authority to cancel the event. On Friday night, that councilmember — Ronaldo Fierro — thanked residents for
speaking out.

“Today we proved that the City of Riverside will not stand for hate and white nationalist rhetoric within our
communities,” Fierro tweeted.

Rep. Mark Takano, D-Riverside, praised residents who raised concerns.

“Freedom of speech is a fundamental human right engrained in the Constitution of the United States, and over the past
two days, Riversiders have proudly exercised this right to make it known – loud and clear – that Rep. Matt Gaetz and
Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene are not welcome to promote their hateful rhetoric in our community,” Takano said. “I am
thankful for the tireless work of those who stepped up and spoke out against this rally and what it would have
represented.”

The rally, part of a nationwide tour featuring two out-of-state lawmakers with reputations for far-right politics and
spreading misinformation, had been moved to the city [after being kicked out of an Orange County venue earlier this
month.](#)

Organizers on Thursday announced the rally would take place in Riverside, and while they withheld the location citing
security concerns, the CEO of the company that runs the city-owned convention center confirmed the downtown
facility was scheduled to play host.

The news shook up Riverside County’s largest city, which has become more liberal politically in recent years as
Democrats [overtook the GOP in countywide voter registration](#) — a plurality of Riverside city voters are registered
Democrats — and a more left-leaning, diverse City Council replaced a set of predominantly White male Republicans.

Gaetz, who represents a Florida House district, and Greene, who represents one in Georgia, are known for their
staunch support of former president Donald Trump, their rejection of [COVID-19](#) safety measures and their false belief
that the 2020 presidential election was stolen.

Greene also is known as a conspiracy theorist who has written pro-QAnon articles and reportedly said 9/11 was a
government plot and that a California wildfire was the work of a “space solar generator” controlled by a Jewish
banking family, among others.

Video clips have surfaced of her espousing racist and Islamophobic views, and a recording showed Greene, who has
reportedly claimed the government orchestrated several mass shootings to gin up support for gun control, following
and taunting a survivor of the 2017 school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

While Greene has said her past social media posts don’t reflect who she is, 11 House Republicans joined all House
Democrats in February in voting to remove Greene from her committee assignments as punishment for her
statements.

Gaetz, who has said leftist radicals posing as Trump supporters were responsible for the [Jan. 6 Capitol riot](#), is under
investigation for an alleged sexual relationship with a 17-year-old girl. He has denied the allegations and said he’s the
victim of an extortion plot.

Raincross Hospitality Man
runs the convention center
the rally was “not an endor



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tion & Visitors Bureau,
at Raincross' booking of
d at that event.”

In an email, Scott Megna, the convention center's general manager, said the facility was contacted the evening of Friday, July 9, “regarding holding a political speech/event” on July 17.

“ ... At that time they were informed the space they required for the event was available,” Megna said, adding that the convention center didn't learn Gaetz and Greene would speak at the planned event until Monday, July 12.

“(Raincross) welcomes clients and guests with diverse opinions and beliefs and does not discriminate against groups who wish to hold lawful events at the center,” Megna said at the time. “Views and opinions expressed by clients and guests are theirs alone.”

Officer Ryan Railsback, spokesman for the Riverside Police Department, said the department had been developing plans for policing the rally.

Earlier Friday, Railsback said he did not know how many officers would be assigned to it or what the price tag likely would be for providing security.

City spokesman Phil Pitchford said event organizers would have been responsible for paying for security for the event itself and the city would have borne the cost of securing public areas outside the venue.

Railsback said he had not been informed of any rally-related death threats being received by convention center people or city officials.

Fierro had objected to a rally featuring Greene and Gaetz occurring at a city-owned facility.

“The hateful and racist rhetoric that will be perpetrated at this event by these two well-known extremists has absolutely no place in our City,” Fierro said in an emailed statement late Thursday.

Fierro said the city could not prevent the event from going forward.

“The Riverside City Council does not have the legal ability to stop or cancel the booking of this event,” he said.

Pitchford wrote in an email that Riverside's agreement with Raincross does not “to our knowledge thus far” authorize the city to unilaterally cancel an event. And he said the booking policy does not specify what types of events may or may not be booked.

The management agreement runs through June 30, 2028, Pitchford said. The city pays Raincross approximately \$500,000 annually to operate the convention center, he said, and can earn about \$100,000 more per year by hitting specified revenue targets. Raincross also manages the Riverside Convention and Visitors Bureau for approximately \$1.6 million a year and the Sports Commission for \$200,000, he said.

Pitchford said the contract for the rally called for Raincross to receive \$54,000. The city could have received a portion of that but the amount wouldn't be known for some time, he said. That, he said, is because the city receives a share of all revenue earned from center events over the course of a year.

City Councilmember Clarissa Cervantes, [who was sworn into office Tuesday, July 13](#), after her June election win, said she was “shocked and disappointed” when she learned about the event at about 2 p.m. Thursday. Shortly after that, she said, she called for an emergency Riverside City Council meeting to address the matter. That session would have been held Friday, she said.

However, Cervantes said she needed three councilmembers' support to schedule an emergency meeting and only one member, Mayor Pro Tem Gaby Plascencia, endorsed her call for one.

Cervantes also called for the convention center.

She said the community should be given a city-owned facility and given the opportunity that the event could have taken place there.



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is for managing the... to Riverside to speak at a... ggest concern, she said, is

"If it's a public safety issue for Orange County, how will this not be a public safety issue for Riverside?" she asked earlier Friday.

Cervantes also objected to the message she anticipated that Gaetz and Greene would have brought to Riverside.

"This is not aligned with our core values" of diversity and inclusion, she said.

Cervantes added she has been receiving dozens of emails on the matter, as are other council members. Social media posts had urged people to call the city and convention center demanding the rally's cancellation, and a petition to cancel the rally circulated via email.

Riverside's progressive community is already planning to protest the event. Women's March Inland Empire, which organizes an annual march calling attention to women's issues, used social media to announce a [No Hate in Our State](#) protest outside the convention center at 5 p.m., two hours before the rally was scheduled to start.

[In a Facebook post](#), Indivisible 41, a Riverside-area liberal group, said its board spent Thursday afternoon discussing the pros and cons of protesting the rally and decided against it, partially due to safety concerns.

"To us, it feels like throwing gasoline on a blazing fire and we do not want to give them the satisfaction of raging against 'radical Democrats,'" the post read. "They are nothing but racist, sexist provocateurs who seek any kind of attention they can get. Let's not give it to them."

The group planned to support "legitimate activism groups" who want to protest, the post added.

The League of Women Voters Riverside also wanted the rally canceled.

"We appreciate that the convention center is a business and has a responsibility to its bottom line," organization President Joan Donahue wrote in a letter to city leaders posted on Facebook. "But the convention center also has a responsibility, as a city funded entity, to respect the city's ideals and reject business that will reflect negatively on our city's image and leave residents questioning our city's priorities."

Tickets were to be free to reserve for general admission. But those who registered received an email asking if they wanted to upgrade to VIP status for \$250 per person, which was to include the chance to take a photo with Gaetz and Greene plus preferred seating.

Proceeds were to go to the Put America First Joint Fundraising Committee, formed in Georgia in late April to support Gaetz's and Greene's reelection campaigns.

Rally critics on social media suggested reserving general admission tickets and not showing up, both to deny tickets to rally supporters and to depress the rally's turnout.

City Councilmember Chuck Conder said earlier Friday that the rally should be allowed to take place.

"To me, this is truly a constitutional issue, the right of free speech, period," Conder said. "I spent a career in the military fighting for our constitutional rights, the first one being freedom of speech."

Conder said the "true test" of freedom of speech is when one doesn't like someone's message but permits them to speak anyway.

"Everybody has to be allowed to speak their mind," he said. "The government can't start saying 'You can say this, but you can't say that.'"

While the city should not a
peace and prevent clashes

“If they want to yell at each

Conder said Raincross sho

“They’re doing a darn good job,” he said.



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Jeff Horseman | Reporter

Jeff Horseman grew up in Vermont and honed his interviewing skills as a supermarket cashier by asking Bernie Sanders “Paper or plastic?” After graduating from Syracuse University in 1999, Jeff began his journalistic odyssey at The Watertown Daily Times in upstate New York, where he impressed then-U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Clinton so much she called him “John” at the end of an interview. From there, he went to Annapolis, Maryland, where he covered city, county and state government at The Capital newspaper before love and the quest for snowless winters took him in 2007 to Southern California, where he started out covering Temecula for The Press-Enterprise. Today, Jeff writes about Riverside County government and regional politics. Along the way, Jeff has covered wildfires, a tropical storm, 9/11 and the Dec. 2 terror attack in San Bernardino. If you have a question or story idea about politics or the inner workings of government, please let Jeff know.

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Dave is a general assignment reporter based in Riverside, writing about a wide variety of topics ranging from drones and El Nino to trains and wildfires. He has worked for five newspapers in four states: Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona and California. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Colorado State University in 1981. Loves hiking, tennis, baseball, the beach, the Lakers and golden retrievers. He is from the Denver area.

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