

Gautho, Julia

From: Renee Golder <rgolder@santacruzca.gov>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 6:05 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Councilmember Melinda Orbach

Dear Capitola City Council,

Our nation is currently experiencing an extreme decline in civility. I'm disappointed to learn that the Council considers Councilmember Melinda Orbach speaking openly about harassment and intimidation to be something that should be criticized, let alone censored.

As a fellow local elected official serving on the Santa Cruz City Council, I know firsthand how real and damaging this kind of harassment can be. I have had people drive by my house yelling "burn it down," I have been called a "right-wing nut job," and my kids and family have been bullied online. This is not acceptable behavior toward anyone, let alone community members who have stepped up to serve.

Councilmember Orbach has already acknowledged that naming an individual was a mistake she will not repeat, but her comments on April 17 were rooted in truth, transparency, and an instinct to protect her family. She has offered mediation multiple times through the Conflict Resolution Center and has continued to show restraint in the face of ongoing personal attacks. Instead of supporting her good-faith efforts at resolution, your Council is legitimizing harassment by agendizing a code of conduct complaint that has no merit.

The facts are clear: Councilmember Orbach described threatening behaviors accurately. She did not engage in name-calling, slander, or personal attacks. She set boundaries that any public servant has the right to establish. For that, she has been met with months of online vitriol, threats of litigation, and political intimidation. Capitola residents and visitors should not have to watch their representatives be silenced or driven out by those who would rather bully than engage in dialogue.

Please dismiss this claim outright on September 25. Capitola needs leaders who protect truth and principle, not those who bow to intimidation. To punish Councilmember Orbach for demanding civility is to send the message that harassment works and to further discourage women leaders from stepping up to serve. Capitola can and must do better.

Respectfully,
Renée Golder

Renée Golder

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Need to Reach your other Representatives?

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State Assembly District 28 [Assemblymember Gail Pellerin](#)
State Senate District 14 [Senator John Laird](#)