



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Under City Pressure, Orange County Board of Supervisors Rescinds its Proposal to Create a “Tent City” in Laguna Niguel

Laguna Niguel, CA – On Tuesday, March 27, 2018, facing the ire of hundreds of residents and community leaders from Laguna Niguel and other nearby cities, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to rescind its scheme to create “tent cities” in Laguna Niguel, Huntington Beach and Irvine. Laguna Niguel Mayor Elaine Gennawey, Mayor Pro Tem John Mark Jennings and Council Members Laurie Davies and Fred Minagar along with Laguna Niguel City Manager Kristine Ridge attended the public hearing. The city’s elected officials spoke in strong opposition to a homeless encampment in Laguna Niguel noting that it would not only put the public safety and quality of life of Laguna Niguel residents at risk, but it would be an inappropriate and unsuitable location for the homeless themselves, who would be miles away from public transportation and have no access to the social services they need.

Mayor Gennawey spoke before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. She concluded her statement with, “As Mayor of Laguna Niguel I stand before you, firmly resolved that homeless people will not be shuffled across the county because that action does NOTHING to help them. I stand before you firmly resolved that your dereliction of duty will not compromise the safety of our children and our residents, I stand before you, as the Mayor of Laguna Niguel and assure you that our city’s 66,000 residents stand with me, shoulder to shoulder, and with one voice demand that you develop a long term plan of action and repeal the March 19 vote.”

“Laguna Niguel residents came together for the good of the community to speak out about a flawed decision. Our residents engaged, took action in a positive and proactive manner, and let our County government know that their March 19 action was detrimental to our city, and to the homeless people they should be helping.”

After Mayor Gennawey, her council colleagues, Mayors and Council Members from other cities and dozens of residents spoke in opposition to the Board of Supervisors' actions on March 19, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to rescind their previous decision prompting the Mayor to release the following statement.

"This was great news and the right thing to do," said Mayor Gennawey. "Thank you to Supervisors Bartlett and Steele for putting the reconsideration on the agenda. It takes courage to publicly state that the Board of Supervisors made a decision in haste and that a better decision is achievable. I give credit to the Board of Supervisors, for upon hearing the outcry from our residents, took a step back to pause, reconsider, and rescind their decision."

The City Council and City staff will remain vigilant and closely follow the County's future proposed plans as well as any judicial orders that may be proclaimed. The City of Laguna Niguel has shown a history of commitment to providing services for both the homeless and those who are threatened by homelessness. Over the past five years, the City has provided direct grants to supportive services for homeless individuals through reputable non-profit service organizations including Family Assistance Ministries, South County Outreach, 2-1-1 Orange County and Families Forward. The City has also improved the Senior Mobility Program by eliminating the waiting list for seniors wanting to utilize the subsidized transportation to the Sea Country Senior Center for meals, serving Laguna Niguel residents most at risk.

"Through our places of worship, our non-profit service clubs and our local government, the Laguna Niguel community has shown it has a great heart for generous service and a commitment to volunteerism," said Gennawey. "However, we have a responsibility to put public safety first and ensure that regional problems are not haphazardly shifted into our community without the input or consent of our residents, businesses and local elected leaders."

To view the interview with the Mayor prior to the hearing, please visit our [City's Facebook page](#).

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