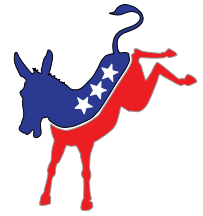


# Culver City Democratic Club

## Active Democrat



[www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com](http://www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com)

Email: [CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com](mailto:CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com) • Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/culvercitydems](https://www.facebook.com/culvercitydems)

Post Office Box 4254 • 6695 Green Valley Circle Culver City, CA 90230

### General Meeting on Zoom — 7p.m. Wednesday, February 8, 2023

### Program: Black History Month— panel discussion on how history influences the future

President's Message by Jeff Schwartz

## Question Authority

Fellow Democrats,

I can no longer say with certainty if I owned or wore a *Question Authority* button as a teen, but they were ubiquitous in my crowd.

It was not until much later, when I became a librarian and an author, that I understood that this phrase represented not simply adolescent defiance but an essential critical reading practice.

For librarians the first six letters of “authority” are crucial; the “who says?” of the punk teen is also a fundamental question in cataloging. Catalogers call the title page of a book (or the equivalent in other media) the “statement of responsibility.” Who has put their name and reputation behind this text? It is also essential to critical reading. Asking on what authority a statement is made is a crucial part of evaluating that statement.

That is a surprisingly controversial point. Judging the merits of the speaker rather than the merits of the statement is known as the ad hominem fallacy, but there is not a clean line dividing those things. Texts have authors, and authors have histories. It would be wrong to dismiss a new book by Charles Murray because he is balding or because he is a white man, but is it wrong to dismiss it because his past books have been widely denounced for everything from math errors to blatant racism? How many bad checks do you need to write before they post your picture at 7-11?

Let's look at two specific authorities who have been regularly invoked in the last couple of years of Culver City politics.

[Chris Elmendorf](#) is a law professor at UC Davis. His BA is in Economics from Oberlin and his JD is from Yale. He is the author or co-author of dozens of peer-reviewed articles and conference papers on a range of topics including voting rights, voter behavior, and environmental protection. He is also one of the leading experts on California land-use law, and it was in this role that then-Council Member Alex Fisch informally sought his advice, a move which local conservatives have [determinedly tried](#) to make appear sinister.

Michael Shellenberger has a BA in Peace and Global Studies from Earlham College and a MA in Anthropology from UC Santa Cruz. His first book: *Break Through: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2007. It argues that concerns about consumption, climate, and the environment are overblown, and that those that do exist can be addressed through technology and economic incentives, rather than regulation. His second: *Apocalypse Never*, published by Harper Collins in 2020, extended this position towards climate skepticism. Rather than a full-fledged climate denier, he was a [merchant of doubt](#): yes, climate change may be happening, but it's not as bad as people say, there's no need to change our society, and we can maintain and even increase our consumption by switching to safe and clean nuclear power. This was in 2020, [twenty-five years after the IPCC determined human activity was the major factor in climate change](#) and thirteen years after [the IPCC and Al Gore shared](#)

[the Nobel Peace Prize](#) for determining the catastrophic scale of climate change and helping raise awareness. It was rapturously received in right-wing media, including Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, and *Reason*, and thoroughly debunked in [Yale Climate Connections](#) and the [LA Review of Books](#). Shellenberger published a piece promoting this book in *Forbes*, who deleted it after the [Climate Feedback](#) project found it riddled with errors. It was subsequently republished by *Briartart*, *Quillette*, and *Daily Wire*.

I became aware of Shellenberger when local conservatives began brandishing his 2021 book *San Fran-Sicko: How Progressives Ruin Cities*, a denunciation of that city's approach to housing and social services. Although it was immediately and definitively trashed by [The New York Times](#) and [The Atlantic](#), Council Member Göran Eriksson bought and distributed copies, including one to Tevis Barnes, head of the City's Housing Department. To the extent that the new Council's [cruelty-first approach](#) to homelessness has an intellectual foundation, [this is it](#).

Shellenberger's journey into the MAGA-verse has continued with a [failed campaign for California Governor](#) as part of the attempted recall of Gavin Newsom, appearances on podcasts hosted by Joe Rogan, Jordan Peterson, and Glenn Beck, and being one of the “journalists” selected by Elon Musk to [comb Twitter's internal communications for evidence of suppression of conservative posters](#).

See MESSAGE on page 2

**from MESSAGE on page 1**

This is the source on whose authority Council Members Eriksson, O'Brien, and Vera are gambling the lives of our un-housed neighbors. Those of you present at our January 18 meeting unanimously adopted [a resolution in opposition](#), and this position was shared by [a huge majority of the speakers at the January 23 City Council meeting](#). The conservative Council majority was unswayed, but this item needs to come before the Council for a second reading, almost certainly at their next scheduled meeting on February 13. Be there!

# Join or Renew Your Culver City Democratic Club Membership!

[To Join the Culver City Democratic Club CLICK HERE for the Club's ActBlue page.](#)

**Join the Culver City Democratic Club for a \$30 donation!**

**For more information on becoming a member of the Culver City Democratic Club, call Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328.**



On January 29 Black Lives Matter-LA and supporters shut down the intersection of Venice and Lincoln where LAPD killed Keenan Anderson. Friend of the Club Baba Akili (left, in baseball jacket) helped run the event. Also on hand were Erin Darling, Mike Bonin, Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, and Club members Leah Pressman (lower right), Jeff Schwartz, and Olga Lexell, among hundreds of others.



Members of the Culver City Democratic Club-endorsed **FORWARD 55 ADEMS SLATE** and their supporters, including State Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, showed up to greet voters at the local in-person voting location: in front of Veterans Memorial Auditorium at the corner of Culver and Overland in Culver City on Saturday, January 21.





## SAVE THE DATE!

# CULVER CITY DEMOCRATIC CLUB POP-UP FUNDRAISER! SATURDAY, MARCH 4 AT 7:00 PM

## VIRTUAL Screening of Brave New Films' Documentary

### *Suppressed and Sabotaged: The Fight To Vote*

## Plus Q & A with Director/Producer Robert Greenwald

The Culver City Democratic Club presents its next Pop-Up Fundraiser on Saturday, March 4 at 7:00 PM. Brave New Films has granted permission to CCDC to host a virtual screening of its 2022 documentary,

## **Suppressed and Sabotaged: The Fight To Vote,**

as a fundraiser for our organization. The film's Director/Producer Robert Greenwald will participate in a Q & A session with the audience immediately following the screening. Ticket prices are \$25 per screen and may be [purchased through Act Blue](#)

*Suppressed and Sabotaged: The Fight To Vote* is a powerful, 44-minute documentary about the growing threat of voter suppression and election sabotage. In 2021, 19 states passed 34 new voter laws following the Big Lie of the 2020 election. The film focuses on this recent wave of voter suppression and subversion laws being enacted in states, and how the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race between Stacey Abrams and Brian Kemp provides a case study for understanding today's voter suppression laws across the country. *Suppressed and Sabotaged* is a call to action against the calculated, unconstitutional and racist attacks intended to suppress the right to vote in America.

Robert Greenwald, a former Hollywood director, launched Brave New Films in 2000. The studio makes, distributes, and organizes around feature-length and short films designed to inspire, agitate and mobilize Americans to demand change in their democracy. Brave New Films is based in Culver City and Robert Greenwald received the CCDC's Spotlight Award for Social Conscience in 2017. More information on Brave New Films is available at <https://www.bravenewfilms.org/>

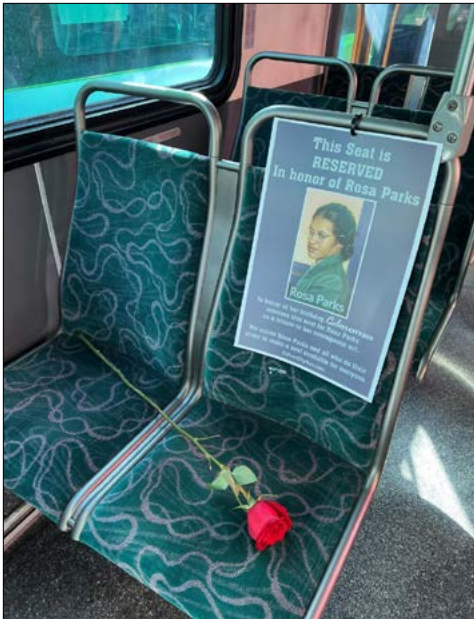
The Culver City Democratic Club is the City's oldest and largest political organization. Proceeds for this fundraiser will support CCDC endorsement efforts. For more information visit <https://www.c-c-d-c.com/> or contact [culvercitydemclub@gmail.com](mailto:culvercitydemclub@gmail.com)

## Di's Corner:

by Diane Rosenberg

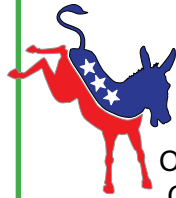
Update on Club member Charlotte Gunter: On Christmas Eve she passed out in her house from not eating enough and not drinking enough liquids. She was taken to the hospital by paramedics. She is still in the hospital but is a little better. She has shingles and they are treating her for that as well. Once they have that under control She will go into a rehab. Talked with her on the phone. Her voice was shaky and weak and still with a positive attitude that she will get better.

At our January 11 General Meeting the election for the 2023 Executive Board was held. For President: Jeff Schwartz, 1st V.P.: Jeanna Harris, 2nd V.P.: William Herrera, Recording Secretary: Shannon Theus, Corresponding Secretary: Cynthia Hart, Treasurer: Eric Fine, Membership Chair: Diane Rosenberg. All were re-elected by acclamation. Congratulations to everyone.



February 4 is Rosa Parks' birthday

Comments expressed in the newsletter are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the Culver City Democratic Club



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

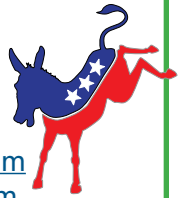
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Club email address: [CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com](mailto:CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com)

Follow us on Twitter: @CulvCityDemClub

Instagram: CulverCityDemClub

and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CulverCityDems>



### February is Black History Month

### the Grassroots Democratic HQ are postcarding and phonebanking now in support of flipping the Wisconsin Supreme Court

It's only February, but the 2023-24 election cycle is in full swing! The [Grassroots Democrats HQ](http://www.grassrootsdemocrats.org) is headed to Wisconsin for the supreme court election happening April 4th of this year.

Wisconsin Supreme Court postcards—[Request addresses here](#)

Phone bank into Wisconsin!

Wednesdays, 3:30pm PT/6:30pm ET—[RSVP](#)

Saturdays, 10:00am PT/1:00pm ET—[RSVP](#)

### February 7

State of the Union Address

### February 8 - 7 PM

CCDC General Meeting via Zoom

### Saturday, February 11 - 10 AM to Noon

You're Invited to Attend the Community Swearing-In Ceremony and Reception for Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas—28th Senate District

10 am to 10:30 am Ceremony—Reception to Follow

[RSVP by clicking here](#) Please RSVP no later than Feb. 9

Address Provided Upon RSVP

### February 12

Darwin Day and Lincoln's Birthday

### February 13 - 7 PM

[Culver City Council Meeting](#)

(Second Reading of Anti-camping ordinance)

### February 14

[CCUSD School Board Meeting](#)

### February 17

Last day for new Legislation to be introduced into State Legislature

### February 26

### SAVE THE DATE

Community Swearing-in and Celebration  
For Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove

### February 27 - 7 PM

[Culver City Council Meeting](#)

# Services not sweeps!

by *Cynthia Hart*

At the January 23rd rally we heard from people who have been actively engaged in outreach to unhoused people.

Olga Lexell challenged the Council Members to attend an actual sweep in person. She said “I think attending a sweep is really important because you have to be able to see what you are doing to these people that you are dehumanizing.” She described what really happens at a sweep. It’s not pretty. After a sweep, all those who are the guests of honor of the sweep, have an increased risk of dying.

Nancy Barba works with PUMA. She pointed out that the Culver City Council’s Emergency Declaration was not being

used by our Council to streamline housing, as Mayor Bass intends to do with her City’s Emergency Declaration. In Culver City the Declaration is being used to strip away all belongings except a pillow and blanket or sleeping bag. Nancy counseled instead “investing in maintaining our humanity.”

January 23rd was a very chilly night on the City Hall terrace, and speaker after speaker invited us to imagine sleeping outside after your tent and coat had been taken by order of the Council.

## Concerns from Former Mayors

Former Mayor Daniel Lee said, “We are told that this is a declaration of emergency or homelessness emergency, but it really is a declaration of war on the un-

housed.” And who specifically are they? “Statistically the unhoused population is very, very Black.” Also there are increasing numbers of female Seniors and the LGBTQ. “We don’t have systems of care, we have systems of enforcement.”

Former Mayors Meghan Sahli-Wells and Alex Fisch give us their takeaways from the January 23 Council Meeting here <https://fb.watch/ihVY3-Tte/>

## Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Our Club member Bubba Fish has served on the Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness since 2021. In normal order, the Council would work with that Committee on an issue of this nature. Not this time.



## Links to articles about the anti-camping law

[Stephen Jones' article from Culver City Crossroads](#)

[From Knock LA](#)

[Westside Voice](#)

# Nothing About Us Without Us

Rarely are the voices of those with lived experience heard in discussions of homelessness, and some unhoused persons are beginning to say that the housed should decide “nothing about us without us.” Some of those voices were heard at the January 23 rally in front of City Hall.

In a moving [video](#) in which persons experiencing homelessness told their stories, one looked straight into the camera and said, “Anybody can become homeless.” Anybody.

Our very own Club Recording Secretary Shannon Theus told us about a period of homelessness she had experienced as a child when the family home was leveled by an earthquake, and the insurance company had been reluctant to pay. She emphasized that her unhoused family needed help. Help not criminalization.

A formerly unhoused person who spoke at the rally, Theo, put it this way, “Housed people are always telling us what’s what. But you don’t have the same reality when you don’t have a bathroom.” He spoke of a “housed consciousness” that seeks to “erase the most vulnerable”.

Theo invited us to ask—What if I had spent all my money on a family health issue? What if I were using substances to cope with the harsh conditions of life unhoused?

Ndindi Kitonga, a local educator and organizer with [Palms Unhoused Mutual Aid \(PUMA\)](#) shared with us a statement from one of her unhoused neighbors, Ruth Rooflesser, about the impact of criminalization under the Los Angeles ordinance.

Ruth Rooflesser writes:

Here is my experience with criminalization: I’ve gotten 7x \$237 tickets here for things like possessing an umbrella + a suitcase & public sleeping. I went to court for two of them. For two more of them, my significant other told the judge we moved away & they were dismissed. When we were in Court, they did not offer or refer us to any housing resources. They did, however, offer to convert my tickets into 12 hours of uncompensated hard labor for Public Works, clearing encampments of other unhoused people, as if wage theft didn’t contribute to my current situation.

The Court made this unpaid labor offer after I pointed out the fact that possessing an umbrella (my crime, according to my ticket) is not even illegal. The judge seemed annoyed at my reluctance to accept diversion. I later found out that all seven tickets were out-of-LAPD jurisdiction. Despite their illegitimacy, I am still dealing with five of them from 2019.

So this situation has, by design, rewarded us for lying about moving, punished us for our honesty & assertion of our constitutional rights & has shamelessly attempted to profit several thousands of dollars off of our very extreme poverty by sending us into collections for five times the original \$237 cost - over \$1,000 per interrupted public nap, despite napping being legal AND LAPD not even having jurisdiction.

This police harassment & entrapment by the judicial system has encouraged us to make ourselves invisible by having no possessions & in the past, it has led to us hiding in dangerous places like dark storm drains & the caverns of bridges, where we nearly died after getting trapped in a fire, & where will have to return if criminalization ramps up into high gear again.

Criminalization forces us to hide, “move along” or face arrest, rather than to make relationships with our neighbors & try to find a sense of belonging in the absence of actually affordable housing.

Criminalization forces us to forfeit our chances at accessing programs like Project Roomkey, which you had to be visibly encamped to qualify for. Outreach is supposed to be able to find us in the first place, & contact or locate us again when resources get matched to our case file, so hiding from them is self-sabotage. It means “I’ve given up hope.” & that outlook is the one you’ve [the City Council] gathered to promote.

It is TOTALLY possible to find belonging without housing, but not if you are being criminalized for your lack of housing.

Thank you  
—Ruth Rooflesser

The Grinch Caucus of the Council assures us that the Culver City tickets will be issued by Code Enforcement Officers and not cops. The cops will only be in the background to assure the Code Enforcement Officers’ safety. But does it really matter whether the hand that writes the ticket belongs to a Police Officer or not? Ruth still can’t pay it, and it only increases her misery index.



**Here’s another photo from the rally against the anti-camping law. It’s being held by an un-housed person**

# New CCDC t-shirts are here!



We are now accepting orders for Club t-shirts in a new design, refreshed for our 70th anniversary.

Shirts are 100% cotton, union made in Boyle Heights.

They come in small, medium, large, and extra-large and, for the first time, we have Men's (boxy) and Women's (fitted) cuts.

Place your order by donating \$20 (or more!) via [Act Blue](#) and emailing us at [CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com](mailto:CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com) your desired size and cut. We will deliver in Culver City and nearby; other orders will be mailed.

We also have a few shirts remaining with the previous design (now known as "heritage" or "throwback") shown below.



## What is the role of the Board?

[Reprinted from #CULVERPRIDE]

When *Board Corner* started a couple of years ago, every other week the Board provided a post-Board-of-Education-meeting recap, highlighting the most important discussion and decision items from the bi-monthly meetings.

As Paula Amezola begins her new term as Board President, the Board will be issuing a weekly Board Corner. In the weeks during which there is no meeting, the Board will highlight some important functions and priorities for which the Board is responsible.

This week, the Board begins its educational series by asking, “*What is the role of the Board?*”

The answer to this can be found on the California School Board Association (CSBA) [Roles and Responsibilities](#) page.

“Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. School board members are locally elected public officials entrusted with governing a community’s public schools. The role of the school board is to ensure that school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities:

- **Setting direction**
- **Establishing an effective and efficient structure**
- **Providing support**
- **Ensuring accountability**
- **Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district, and public schools**

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system’s accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.”

The second thing to know is that the Board supervises, supports one employee, and holds accountable only one employee – the superintendent. The Board does not manage other administrators, teachers, or certificated employees, nor does the Board have authority over any issues with individual students, classrooms or on-campus activities.

The Board looks forward to providing more information about board governance in general, as well as giving you insight into the priorities, thought processes and strategies of CCUSD’s five-member Board of Education.

[The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the members of the Culver City Democratic Club at their January 11 general meeting]

## Resolved: The Culver City Democratic Club Opposes the Criminalization of People Experiencing Homelessness

Whereas this Club is [on record supporting a Housing First approach](#),

Whereas involuntary relocation, forced displacement, and contact with law enforcement (aka “sweeps”) [have been proven to cause harm to people experiencing homelessness](#), including loss of essential items such as medications and legal documents, disconnection from jobs, schools, healthcare, and social services, and death,

Whereas [109 students in the Culver City Unified School District are known to have experienced homelessness in 2022](#), many of these students struggle with attendance, and sweeps will further disrupt and destabilize their lives,

Whereas sweeps divert staff and money from effective and compassionate projects launched by previous City Councils, including safe parking, safe camping, and Project Homekey,

And whereas the Ninth Circuit Court has ruled in *Martin v. Boise* and [subsequent decisions](#) that it is unconstitutional to ban sleeping in public without providing adequate housing options,

Therefore, the Culver City Democratic Club endorses [the statement](#) released by Culver City Vice Mayor McMorrin and Councilmember Puza on January 11, 2023, opposing the [Emergency Declaration](#) ratified by the remainder of the City Council on January 9 and joins them in condemning the criminalization of homelessness.

## The most important election you’ve never heard of

It’s only the second week of January, but the 2023-24 election cycle is already in full swing! That’s right—the [Grassroots Democrats HQ](#) is headed to Wisconsin for the supreme court election happening April 4th of this year. The results will directly impact voting rights, reproductive rights, and partisan gerrymandering in a state critical for Democrats to hold the White House and win back the House in 2024. This can start the first drop in a 2024 blue wave.

Our allies at the Grassroots Democratic HQ are postcarding and phonebanking now in support of flipping the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Click here to join in:

### Write postcards

Wisconsin Supreme Court postcards—  
[Request addresses here](#)

### Virtual phone banking

Phone bank into Wisconsin!  
Wednesdays, 3:30pm PT/6:30pm ET—[RSVP](#)  
Saturdays, 10:00am PT/1:00pm ET—[RSVP](#)



## Tyre Nichols was beaten to death by five Black policemen

by Isabel Wilkerson

It is tragically horrific cases like that of Tyre Nichols in Memphis (or of Freddy Gray in Baltimore in 2015) that remind us that caste is not about Black vs White. It is about the deadly dehumanization of the subordinated caste that allows almost any atrocity to be inflicted upon them — by anyone in any group, including their own, in order to uphold the caste system and to maintain one’s own place, however marginal, within it.

This is why racism alone can at times seem an incomplete term to describe what Black people are faced with in the country their ancestors built.

“It is in keeping with caste protocols,” I wrote in *Caste* back in 2020, “that, of the few officers who have been prosecuted for police brutality in recent high-profile cases, a notable number of them were men of color—a Japanese-American officer in Oklahoma, a Chinese-American officer in New York City, and a Muslim-American officer in Minneapolis [and now, we must add, five African-American officers in Memphis]. These are cases in which men of color pay the price for what upper-caste men have gotten away with.”

“Each case presents a complicated story that presumably dismisses race as a factor, but which makes perfect sense, and maybe only makes sense, when seen through the lens of a caste system.”

As this case proceeds and video footage is released, we must guard against the further dehumanization of Black people who, through videos that go viral, are deprived of the dignity and sacredness of their final moments on this earth. We must guard against the subliminal normalization of violence against the Black body, which carries the danger of numbing us to it and sends the message that Black people are somehow deserving of the unspeakable.

Posted to Facebook by Isabel Wilkerson, the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*



# MOVE Culver City Resolution

## **This RESOLUTION will be proposed and voted on at the February 8 General Meeting**

Whereas in 2020 the City of Culver City adopted its Bicycle Pedestrian Action Plan (BPAP);

Whereas the BPAP states as a goal, to “develop an active transportation network that safely and comfortably connects residential neighborhoods to destinations like employment centers, grocery stores, community centers, schools, shopping areas, and transit stops;”

Whereas the BPAP also sets as a goal to, “Prioritize projects that create safe welcoming spaces for all people, with an added focus on ways to serve those who have the least access to financial and social resources;”

Whereas in January 2020, the City adopted a Complete Streets policy intended to establish guiding principles for transportation improvements to accommodate people of all ages and abilities traveling by the different modes of transportation. This policy aims to promote healthy and sustainable multimodal mobility for Culver City residents and visitors. To accomplish this, the Complete Streets policy guides the provision of a safe, convenient, and comfortable street system throughout the city that provides for the needs of road users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, including bicyclists, pedestrians, drivers, and transit users;

Whereas MOVE Culver City (MCC) on Culver and Washington Boulevards is the first and only complete street area that we have in Culver City;’

Whereas we face a climate change emergency which requires an immediate response, including a reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), the MCC quick build process allows the city to respond rapidly to the crisis;

Whereas MCC serves as an inspiration and model for other jurisdictions;

And whereas, MOVE Culver City is a key component of a regional network and is essential for dealing with the millions of visitors who will be coming here for the 2028 Olympics;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Culver City Democratic Club supports the MOVE Culver City pilot project and urges the City Council to approve the bus lanes and transit amenities, the bike lanes and the pedestrian amenities named MOVE Culver City and make permanent the MOVE Culver City project in Culver City.

Proposed by Mary Daval and Michelle Weiner