

OPPOSE

*DRAFT MOTION: The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) opposes the City's lawsuit against journalist Ben Camacho which seeks prior restraint on the press and seeks to assign the City's negligence to a reporter for publishing documents that the City itself released to him. In a city where trust in government has been continually rocked by scandal after scandal, efforts to hamper the press from reporting on the City strike us as particularly antidemocratic. The lawsuit has been widely condemned by media and first amendment coalitions.*

*The First Amendment and freedom of the press are backbones to a free and informed society. This demand for censorship is an affront to the first amendment and those would seek to use the California Public Records Act to hold their government accountable. The City's effort to assign negligence to the reporter who legally obtained the information rather than to the City itself is intended to have a chilling effect on accountability.*

*In a budget crisis, this case is a massive waste of government resources, as the Supreme Court has repeatedly struck down efforts to censor publication.*

*As noted by the Freedom of the Press Foundation, "The city has hit the trifecta of anti-press First Amendment violations: first, demanding journalists give back documents the government released, second, censoring journalists from publishing information, and now, holding journalists financially liable for truthful publications — something that, once again, the Court has never permitted."*