



Monday, October 31, 2022

Santa Clara Mayor Lisa Gillmor
City Hall, 1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear Mayor Lisa Gillmor,

On October 14, the [San Jose Spotlight](#) reported that Santa Clara Councilmember and Mayoral candidate Anthony Becker, who is the first openly gay official for the city, has been the victim of frequent homophobic slurs and death threats. Many of these hateful comments have been posted on a website, Santa Clara News Online, promoting you. Becker has repeatedly asked you to speak up, but even after learning about the issue, you continued to amplify the blog. Following the October 14 story, [several LGBT advocacy groups](#) called on you to denounce the blog.

It has been weeks, and yet you still have not done so.

Since the original story, in the absence of your leadership, commenters have continued to post new statements minimizing the danger of homophobia and denigrating Becker's experience. Your refusal to denounce Santa Clara News Online has also allowed these sentiments to metastasize to other sites like Nextdoor.

On the national stage, we know that when hateful comments are allowed to stand, they evolve into boldfaced bigotry and physical harm. So we have no choice but to take these comments seriously.

It is our understanding that much of what is published on Santa Clara News Online is favorable to your political campaign. Genuine allyship takes more than empty virtue signaling - it's forged during hard situations. If you truly value principles over politics, you would set an example for your residents that there is no place for hate speech in Santa Clara - regardless (and especially) if the perpetrators are friends.

We call on you to 1) immediately condemn Santa Clara News Online in its entirety, and 2) issue a public apology to Councilmember Becker for allowing this hate to fester for as long as you have.

The stakes could not be higher for LGBTQ+ people like Councilmember Becker, and anything less than your complete condemnation is complicity.

Signed,

Equality California
California Democratic Party LGBTQ Caucus
Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee
(BAYMEC)

Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club
Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club
Silicon Valley Stonewall Democrats

Senator Scott Weiner
Assemblymember Alex Lee
Assemblymember Ash Kalra