

West Covina Announces First-Ever Recall

A group of West Covina residents, tired of the continual budget crisis plaguing the city and leaving it under scrutiny of the State Auditor, have come together to address what they feel is the first problem in West Covina finances and that is 5th District Council Member, Tony Wu.

This small group of residents wrote the recall paperwork charging Wu with misconduct and failed leadership, submitted it to the West Covina City Clerk and received approval to contact all residents in the 5th District asking for their signatures on the petition to take the Tony Wu recall to a vote.

According to the Committee Treasurer, Steve Bennett, there are 12,497 voters in the 5th District and they will need 20%, or 2,500 voters, to sign the recall petitions to get the recall on the ballot.

The Committee, led by Principal Officer, Bill Azelton, has documented their reasons for the recall and backed it up with San Gabriel Valley Tribune newspaper articles and documents from lawsuits and pending lawsuits now a matter of record.

The first charge, and most costly, in the recall paperwork is litigation and lawsuits caused by what was determined to be wrongful termination as reported by the SGV Tribune. Two former West Covina administra-



Shade's Perspective

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tors, terminated by former City Manager, David Carmony, charged the same reasons in their lawsuits -- age discrimination.

West Covina Fire Chief, Larry Whithorn, a 30-year veteran of the Department, and former Police Chief and law enforcement veteran, Mark Taylor, were both fired March 2019. Taylor had received "glowing recommendations" from his supervisor and former City Manager, Chris Freeland, who was also terminated March 2019.

The Whithorn lawsuit has cost West Covina \$4.1 million plus attorney fees. Taylor's lawsuit is pending.

Discussions with West Covina residents long-involved with West Covina and the city politics have had concerns with Councilman Tony Wu's behavior and

sometimes uncontrolled outbursts leading to the Committee's charges of Wu misconduct. Physical threats last year against former Manager Carmony, led to complaints filed with Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Human Resources' documents allege that Wu's verbal outbursts have created a hostile work environment at West Covina City Hall.

Additional charges include:

- Transparency Violations with closed door-meetings violating the Brown Act;
- Redevelopment of the toxic hazardous waste landfill, BKK;
- Establishment of a West Covina Health Department using American Rescue Plan money threatening to bankrupt West Covina;
- Failure to support struggling businesses with federal COVID pandemic money and redevelop portions of downtown to aid small businesses.

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune has followed closely some of the West Covina events surrounding Tony Wu and much of those reports can be found on TonyWuRecall.com website.

The Tony Wu Recall Committee asserts: "The recall action aims to address Wu's misdeeds, restore trust, and ensure West Covina and its residents are properly represented."