



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Moriah Gaynor

mgaynor@saniego.gov

C: 619-510-6870

Councilmember LaCava Calls for New City of San Diego Seal, Decries Glorification of Conquistadors and Emphasizes Inclusion of Modern Cultural Elements

San Diego —Councilmember Joe LaCava proposed changing the official seal of the City of San Diego to diverge from paying homage to Spanish conquistadors, including Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo and Fray Junipero Serra, and include modern cultural elements.

“The City of San Diego should be an example,” said Councilmember LaCava. “The current City seal erases the history of the Indigenous Peoples who occupied this land long before us, and glorifies those who stole it. Words matter, symbols matter, actions matter. It’s time we take action to right this wrong.”

In the seal’s [description](#),¹ it reads that “the caravel represents the exploration and settlement by the Spanish.” Other [scholarly articles](#)² elaborate to say, “for a crest a typical "Carmelite belfry" is used, which suggests the early Christianization of San Diego by the "Mission Fathers" of Fray Junipero Serra...”

Fray Junipero Serra was one of the first Spanish missionaries in the region, settling the first nine of 21 Spanish missions in California from San Diego to San Francisco. Until March 2021, Fray Serra was also the namesake of San Diego Unified School District’s Junipero Serra High School, which will now be called Canyon Hills High School after students successfully petitioned for the name change, citing Serra’s missionary past as the reason for the change³.

Furthermore the seal places a emphasis on manufacturing and agriculture, the industries of our past.

“A seal is meant to represent identity, and right now ours says that San Diego is rooted in the past. An update is needed to better portray our city’s connection with a forward-looking economy, our diversity, as well as our unique connection to the border and our bi-national region,” said Councilmember LaCava. “Over 100 years

¹ “Official City of San Diego Seal.” The City of San Diego. Accessed March 17, 2021. <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/aboutus/factshistory/seal>.

² JJ Santa Pinter, “The Heraldic Seal of the City of San Diego, California,” n.d.

³ Taketa, Kristen. “San Diego Unified Changes Name of Junipero Serra High School, Removes Conquistador Mascot.” Tribune. San Diego Union-Tribune, March 10, 2021.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2021-03-09/san-diego-unified-changes-name-of-junipero-serra-high-school-conquistador-mascot-after-students-said-they-were>.

ago, a City Council decided to design a City seal by opening it up to the public. I say, it's time this Council do the same."

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