



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Councilmember Campillo Takes Aim at Past Leaders, County and Announces Renewed Sales Tax Push for 2026 Election in Inauguration Address**

*Councilmember Campillo today was sworn in for his second term representing District 7 on the San Diego City Council*

SAN DIEGO — In his inauguration speech this morning, San Diego City Councilmember Raul Campillo (D7) focused on the theme of truth as he delivered harsh criticisms of past city leaders for financial mismanagement and the County Board of Supervisors for inaction on issues such as homelessness. Councilmember Campillo also announced a renewed push for a sales tax increase in the City of San Diego for the 2026 election.

**“The next four years will tell us — and more than that, it will tell the voters — if city leaders tell the truth and focus on what is right, or if we will have another cycle, another generation, of a culture of cowardice,” said Councilmember Raul Campillo.**

Campillo took listeners through his vision for the City: safe neighborhoods, well-maintained infrastructure, and prosperous citizens.

**“If we re-affirm our dedication to the three things a city can and must do well: protect safety, build infrastructure, and get people their permits to spur economic growth and create great jobs, then we restore trust in government,” said Councilmember Campillo.**

For the full text of the speech, see attached.

### **About Councilmember Raul Campillo**

*Councilmember Raul Campillo proudly represents the Seventh Council District of the City of San Diego and serves as the Chair of the Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee.*

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Good morning, my fellow San Diegans. Before I share my remarks on my second term, I want to thank the people who did so much to make my first term a success.

I want to thank the voters, my constituents, for whom this is really all about, for entrusting me with a second term. This job is the best job in the world because while the work is a reward in itself, the ability to improve my neighbors' lives is a palpably enjoyable endeavor, and I treasure the moments I am able to do that. Doubling paid parental leave for city workers; ensuring we have project labor agreements with our city contracts; making it easier to permit mental health and detox beds; fighting hate crimes with a new state law thanks to Assemblymember Chris Ward; and delivering more miles of pavement in District 7 than in any other four year period and dozens of new acres to Mission Trails Regional Park—I am proud of the work we've championed and that city workers have delivered.

I want to also thank my tireless staff. The reason I was re-elected without a single opponent even filing the paperwork to run against me, is because my staff is so good at what they do: to Vic and Sanna, Carrie and Summer and Crane, Miles and Anthony, Cheryl and Emma, and to Jared, Jessica, Sophie and Justine who served earlier in my office, I thank you. But Michael Simonsen, my chief of staff, the leader I needed as a new elected official four years ago, he has served many elected officials and organizations in San Diego, and when I hired him, I was told by many he was a hall of fame selection. They were right. Michael, I salute you.

But the people who help stay grounded and focused day after day, my mom Teresa, my dad Alex, and most of all, my wife Nadia. I have to say, if you ever heard something I've said and thought it was correct, almost every time, I ran it by Nadia first and she made it better. In the last four years, she agreed to marry me, she planned our wedding, she gave birth to our son Rafael, she won two campaigns for office, and she taught our son to say Papa. Nadia, I said when we got married, and I'll say it all the days of my life: I believe in God and I believe in family, and my belief in both is vindicated by you and now by Rafael. I love you.

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Now, we turn to the reality of governing, the day-to-day, the day-by-day project of keeping our residents safe, of maintaining our neighborhood infrastructure, and creating a local economy that gives opportunities to those who work hard.

If we are to speak the truth about ourselves as a city, we must acknowledge that some things a city can do well, and other things, it cannot. To invoke my favorite Shakespearean aphorism: "this above all, to thine own self be true."

So let's tell the truth. The truth is, that Measure E, which would have single-handedly solved our budget woes for the first time in over 27 years, failed by 3,506 votes. It is also the truth that despite these budget woes, we are not in as dire a place as some would have you think. Our budget has been principally undermined by the decisions of the City Government and by the County Board of Supervisors for the last 20 years.

I must spend some time putting this all into historical context.

In November 2002, our city council doubled down on a mistake they had made a few years prior: it stared at a budget deficit like we are doing right now, but instead of responsibly asking for a new revenue source like I just did, our then-leaders raided the pension, on the consent agenda nonetheless, which spurred federal investigations, destroyed the public's trust in us for a generation, denigrated the honorable public servants who revealed the problem, and caused our liabilities to balloon so badly that mayors and councils have undermined our own city workforce and left our neighborhood infrastructure to crumble.

To improve the lives of that workforce and restore that infrastructure: That is the primary reason I proposed and why I needed to propose Measure E, to be true to the voters and put before them something that would honestly and responsibly solve the budget deficit, to deliver safety, infrastructure, and economic progress.

While the city leaders of the early 2000s put us into this deep hole, the Board of supervisors for the last 20 years was more concerned with the size of its savings account than delivering health and human services, so the City filled the leadership gap on homelessness issues. It then became an expectation that the City would just keep doing this. But let's also be very clear, to thine own self be true: our city charter does not require and history does not reflect that the City should actually do this. The County must step up, finally, to take on its legal responsibility to address health and human services for the homeless in a wholesome and meaningful way. Their funding

streams are more flexible and their legal authority is far more clear to handle it.

The City should be building parks and libraries and firehouses; the county should be building shelters and units to address homelessness. I do have to say, Supervisor Joel Anderson and I have worked on solutions in the shared area of our District. And I thank him and his staff for that pragmatic approach.

But until the County changes, the City is stuck. They have the leaders—they simply need to be true to themselves and do the work. Between 17 other cities and the County Government, the incentives are misaligned and the efforts are shirked onto us. Mayor Gloria has stated this repeatedly, and I look forward to working with him to hold other cities and the County Board of Supervisors accountable.

Now, here's why this history matters: 99% of our daily lives are affected by the City government, but roughly 87% of your sales and property taxes are kept by Sacramento and the County, respectively. Police, fire, lifeguards, your trash, your potholes, your sidewalks, your parks, your libraries, the street lights, all of your water, potable and waste and storm, your permits to build and renovate your home, and even your business licenses – that's all the City, but we have two other governments that take 87% of our sales taxes and property taxes. In that context, I have to salute our city workers who do so much with relatively very little.

The next four years will tell us, and more than that it will tell the voters, if city leaders tell you the truth and focus on what is right, or if we will have another cycle, another generation, of

the same-old-same-old. A change of approach is needed, and if that does not happen, a changing of the guard will be merited, if it isn't already. The structural problems we inherited, the old way of business, the old way of budgeting, the old way of politics do not serve us anymore.

So: I will be bringing the 1-cent sales tax back for consideration this next election cycle. Instead of doing what leaders have done in the past, which is turn tail and run from the responsible solutions to our problems, or worse, forget the past all together and hoping voters would too, I commit to our residents and our city workers that I will fight for what the City is good at doing. I hope that the last 3,506 voters who voted no on Measure E will observe us listening to them over the next two years by focusing on the issues the city is good at; I certainly will be. To earn their trust, our residents want the city to focus on what it is legally obligated to do, which not coincidentally it is also very good at doing, when we have the funding.

You know what we are great at: we are actually great at public safety. We are the second safest big city in America, and we do it for hundreds of millions of dollars less than Los Angeles and San Francisco. There are many reasons for this, but the biggest one is that the San Diego Police Department is well-trained and mission-driven to keep us safe. And when criminals know that we have a great department, they take their criminality elsewhere. Now, I think we have to also address key issues of property crimes and improve staffing, but fundamentally, we have very very low violent crime here, and that's because the

strongest prevention against people who are ready to commit crimes is having a police department that will stop them.

I do want to make one thing clear on public safety as well: we must not destroy the independence of the City Attorneys Office. I will never vote to eliminate the independent branch of city government that holds mayors and councils accountable, and I challenge anyone to explain why the council should have political control over its lawyers instead of the voters having their watchdog. Also, why bust a union workforce that saves us taxpayer dollars, prevents gun violence, and holds criminals accountable? This idea is a distraction, and it should be permanently shelved. It will not save us money, it will further cost us the public's trust.

Now, you know what else we are good at: we are good at neighborhood infrastructure. We have some world class parks, we should have more; we have one of the most robust library and archive systems, and we need upgrades; and when we dedicate the funding, we can pave thousands of miles of roads and fix thousands of street lights like we have this past four years. But when they are neglected for 20-30 years, catching up is a tall task.

And the last thing we are okay at, but could be far better at: spurring a strong economic environment. At the core of this is our safety and infrastructure. A safe community with stable infrastructure encourages spending, investment, and reduces the cost of living. We must remember that the safer we are and the more infrastructure is fixed, the lower the insurance rates and the repair costs for residents and the city are, and we face

reduced litigation costs. Safety and Infrastructure make things more affordable.

But the City could do one thing very specifically to support our economy: we could help all businesses and homeowners get their permits far faster. I believe the best way to do that is to move towards the model of self-certification for a wide array of projects, like the city of Phoenix has. We are delaying investments by our family-owned small businesses and world-class institutions by passing piecemeal policies that overcomplicate the process.

Small businesses don't need the city hovering over their shoulders while they literally move refrigerators from one side of their kitchens to the other, and big contractors—they have the insurance and consultants to ensure they build their developments correctly, but the permits take years sometimes.

If we helped business with self-certification policies, and paired that together with strong labor standards, this collaboration would mean we get high quality jobs, quicker quality construction, and the homes we need built and the improvements to businesses. More affordability, more economic opportunity, and more investor appeal in our region—the city could be great at this. And we would not have to increase density regulations one iota to get things done that are already allowable with current policies; we wouldn't have to tell any more community planning groups that they need to bear the brunt of new policies without their meaningful input. That matters to me, too.



And I believe strongly, and I think we all know it inherently, if we focus on public safety, on infrastructure, and on strengthening our local economy, the reverberating benefits will reduce homelessness, too. Focusing on what you're good at tends to make a whole set of other things work better. If we reaffirm our dedication to the three things a city can and must do well: protect safety, build infrastructure, and get people their permits to spur economic growth and create great jobs, then we restore trust in government. We can break the cycle of budgetary constraints we've faced for so long. We can alter the culture of politics.

So I ask you all here today: Do you want to build a safe city, a sound city, and a thriving economic city? To our own selves be true: I ask you all to be partners in building this true city.

This idea of the true city, it is my vision and my mission for San Diego – not just for the next *four* years, but for the next *forty*. It is the city I want to pass on to my son Rafael. It is a model of governance that works, it is a model of governance that our residents want, and I will work to deliver it.