

Full transcript of City Council Member Robert Torres' commentary on the recent deaths of teenagers In Pomona from gun violence at a City Council meeting 2/6/2023:

City Council Member Robert Torres: Thank you so much, I appreciate it, Mayor, for the . . . uh . . . passing that baton over. ummmmm . . . You know, one of the great things about Pomona that I witnessed - ummmm - growing up as a kid and being on the City Council is the fact that we have so many great organizations, in the community, that do come together in difficult times.

Ummmm. When I was growing up, there was a little kid Ethan Torres that got shot and killed - small kid - ummmm - And obviously, when I first got elected to the City Council, there was a young boy, Ethan. that was killed as well. ummm. And . . . It's a major issue here - in the city - ummmm - and it is - does require an investment into the youth. And what does that investment look like? What does the youth want that to look like? ummmm . . .

You know, it's, it's . . . one thing that we've been working on, I've been talking to the City about is . . . ummm, you know, one thing we applied for last year was - we applied for a grant with - the United States Congress to get, ummm, four million dollars for the *La Casita Teen Center* at Palomares Park. ummmm - And I've been holding onto this information for about a month or two, but since the City had found out about it, I just wanted to tell people because they've been asking - is that we will be receiving four million dollars from the federal government to invest in Palomares Park Teen Center - *La Casita Teen Center*. ummmm. Just like the Mayor was talking about - that's the type of investment we need in the community. Ummmm.

My mother when she was on the City Council, she - ummm - she built the skate park. And she built that *La Casita Teen Center*. And ummm . . . one thing she did was she included the community in those discussions. And . . . she invited the youth out . . . The youth designed that skatepark. It wasn't the staff. It was the youth that designed that skatepark. And the youth that recommended what type of education programs go into *La Casita Teen Center*.

So - fast forward to today. ummmm. One thing I think we should do is engage the community and ask the youth - what do they want *La Casita* to look like?

(Here, **Council Member Torres** changes tack and singles out **Jesus Sanchez**, sitting in the audience.)

And some people in here want to continue to shake their heads, *right?* Yes, sir. But the reality of the situation, is . . . I want to encourage the community to - do not take advice from these individuals. Do not take . . . do not base your political opinions off individuals who represent themselves in those manners - right there. Because the fact of the manner is - the City Council here, we are really working *hard* to address the City.

Yes, we are, sir. And we have individuals here who I call divisive individuals, who represent themselves, and they don't represent this community. And the bottom line is each one of the City Council members here have been elected to represent this community whether you like it or not, Sir.

So . . . And the sad part about it is this - we need more police presence - whether you like it or not. We need to hire more police on the street. Yes, we do.

(the audience boos quietly.)

Mayor Sandoval interrupts: Ro-, Ro-, Ro-

Torres (disregards the Mayor and continues talking): . . . the fact that you have a few officers patrolling the streets at one time is flat-out dangerous. And if you talk to the residents of Pomona, (repeats) . . . if you talk to the residents of Pomona, they want more investment in public safety. And . . . If you knock on that door, Jesus, (Here, Torres addresses Sanchez by his first name and knocks 4 times on the dais) and you tell them to defund the police . . .

Jesus yells from the audience: Fuck you, Robert.

Mayor Sandoval: Ok. Robert, Robert. Robert. Robert.

CM Torres continues in his comments to Jesus Sanchez: . . . they will throw you out.

Jesus Sanchez: It isn't about me. I'm just fucking responding to your comments . . .

Mayor Sandoval: Robert. Robert. Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus Sanchez: Kids are fucking dying and you are making it about me, you fucking idiot.

Woman's voice (presumably staff): You need to calm . . . No cussing.

Mayor Sandoval: Hey Chief. Hey Chief. Chief. Chief. Chief. Chief. Jesus. Robert. Robert. Robert. Robert. Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus Sanchez: What the fuck it wrong with you? You haven't done shit. There's been kids coming in here for five plus years. You haven't done shit.

Mayor Sandoval: Jesus

Jesus Sanchez: Fuck you, Tim. You haven't done shit either.

Mayor Sandoval: I want him removed. I want him removed. Yeah.

Jesus Sanchez: And that's the message here tonight. All of you haven't done shit. And the kids are fucking dying , , ,

Mayor Sandoval: I met with you two weeks ago.

Jesus Sanchez: Fuck you, that's not enough.

Mayor Sandoval: Oh then . . . we can't work together then. Chief, I'd like to . . . I'd like to ask . . .

Man's voice from the audience: Transparency is the issue and it starts with Chief Ellis.

Mayor Sandoval: Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus Sanchez: In your public . . . in your comments, you made a comment . . .

Woman's voice (presumably staff) **to Sandoval:** We need to take a break.

Mayor Sandoval to the woman: We are going to take a break.

Woman's voice (presumably staff): We need to take a break.

Mayor Sandoval to the public: We are going to take a break, folks.

(At his point the City's archived version of the meeting goes blank, but in the original videotape, the cameras are still recording):

CM Torres: Dude . . . Don't you . . .

Jesus Sanchez yells over Torres' comments: You made it about me. You made it about me, Bobby.

(**Mayor Sandoval** stands up and walks behind the chairs of Council members **Ontivaros-Cole**, **Lustro** and **Torres** and moves toward the audience. Council member **CM Torres** continues berating **Jesus Sanchez**. There is yelling from others in the audience in the background.)

Council Member Torres: Don't be flipping people off. Don't represent yourself like that. And, if you are the type of person who likes to dish it out, try to be the type of person that can *take* it.

Jesus: The City Manager doesn't give a shit about these people.

Mayor Sandoval: Chief.

Man's voice in the audience says something inaudible about the right to speak.

(The original videotape is muted at this point, but continues still filming the action in the City Council Chambers. The City's archived videotape edits this part out entirely.)