



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Event: **Announcement and Rally**

Location: San Jose City Hall
Date: August 13, 2024
Time: 4:00 PM –New Time

Democrat to Endorse Peter Hernandez over Zoe Lofgren in Congressional District 18 Race

Republican challenger calls out 30-year incumbent's betrayal of the Ohlone people

(SAN JOSE, CA) – **Peter Hernandez**, the Republican challenging Rep. **Zoe Lofgren** in California's 18th congressional district, is set to back legislation that will affirm the **Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's** federal status. The longtime congresswoman is the subject of intense criticism for her mistreatment of the Tribe, which includes a January 2023 conversation on Capitol Hill in which Lofgren demanded that Tribal Chairwoman **Charlene Nijmeh** sign away a vast swath of the Tribe's rights and freedoms in exchange for legislation that would correct the federal government's mistake.

As part of the Trail of Truth March to Washington D.C, the Tribal Chairwoman, Charlene Nijmeh, along with tribal members, will leave Emma Prusch Park at 3:00 PM as they begin their journey on foot and on horseback for a planned arrival at 4:00 PM at San Jose City Hall. The Low Riders and a motorcycle club will be traveling with the Chairwoman as they make their way down King Road to 200 East Santa Clara Street.

There on the steps of San Jose City Hall, Democrat Charlene Nijmeh, who took 11% of the vote from Zoe Lofgren in the March 2024 primary, will endorse Peter Hernandez for Congress.

The Tribe was previously federally recognized as the **Verona Band of Alameda County**, was never terminated by an act of Congress, and 100% of its members descend from that previously recognized Tribe. But the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** erred by omitting Muwekma from the original 1978 list of officially recognized Tribes. In the four decades since, the Tribe has struggled to get the federal government to correct its mistake.

The Hernandez campaign circulated this statement:

Rep. Zoe Lofgren turned her back on the Muwekma Ohlone people, betraying one of the most marginalized and historically maligned populations in our State. Her horrific behavior continues California's genocide against this community with her

cold, callous, and extortionate behavior. Unlike the lust for control and demands of submission that typify Rep. Lofgren's behavior, I will take the opposite approach.

I believe deeply in bottom-up government. I believe that communities should be self governing – whether the City of Hollister, Santa Clara County, or the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. Local decisions should be in the hands of local communities. The decentralization of power and decision-making will be my driving policy approach to every challenge, including this challenge of justice for one of the most marginalized indigenous populations in California.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe is comprised of all surviving indigenous lineages aboriginal to the greater San Francisco Bay region. The Tribe's ancestors were forcibly enslaved in feudal agrarian systems at Missions Dolores, Santa Clara and San Jose.

The federal government has a clear trust responsibility to prevent the threat that California's housing and land use policies pose to the Tribe.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has broad-based support from virtually everyone in the Bay Area.

A civil society requires unity, and to that end, a renewed form of representation that doesn't just give crumbs off the table. It informs the people, while handing them back their power. That is my goal. That is my commitment to you.