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California Law Lets Cities Eject People Who Disrupt Public Meetings.

As city-council and school-board events across the country grow rowdier, the Golden State has new rules for dealing with the most aggressive offenders.

The heckling, threats and insults had gone on for months, but it was at a town meeting last fall that a personal nightmare finally became a public scandal for Marico Sayoc. As the first Filipina mayor of the small Silicon Valley city of Los Gatos, California, Sayoc had been targeted throughout her term for her race, gender and policies by a small group of locals who disagreed with her.

The group of protesters, some of whom allegedly had affiliations with white supremacist groups, had showed up to her house, promised to hurt her, and accused her of being a Marxist. Her son, a high schooler, had also become politically active during the pandemic, raising awareness about George Floyd's killing by police, anti-Asian hate and gay rights. This made him a target, too. In October 2021, protesters showed up to the Los Gatos town council meeting to complain about mask mandates and progressivism run amok — and to spread “lies” about her son, Sayoc said.

“No elected official should ever have to worry that their children’s personal, private lives will be brought into a town meeting,” she said. According to first-hand accounts and a video of the meeting, Sayoc — audibly shaken — called for a recess. The public was removed, the Zoom feed was cut, and her husband and the protesters got in a heated argument outside. The meeting restarted nearly an hour later.

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