

FIRED UP

The Santa Clara County Board of Education is expected to censure board member **JOSEPH DI SALVO** Wednesday after investigators found he engaged in sexist behavior.

Two county employees and two board members filed complaints against Di Salvo in January, saying he engaged in gender and racial harassment. An independent investigator, hired by Superintendent **MARY ANN DEWAN**, found Di Salvo demeaned some women, but not that he racially harassed people.

"Board Member Di Salvo's individual behavior at board meetings consisted of making negative, critical, disrespectful, dismissive, demeaning and heated comments and behavior when challenging women who he perceived were not doing what he wanted," the resolution stated.

But Di Salvo told Fly the investigation lacked evidence, aimed to harm his re-election campaign and is an effort "to distract voters from the important issues affecting students."

"I have always sought to treat staff and fellow board members with respect and sincere admiration for the work they do," he said. "I have engaged in heated debates, apologizing if comments were worded too harshly."

Board member **CLAUDIA ROSSI** told Fly that DiSalvo's behavior "created a very difficult working environment" at times.

Rossi cited a 2017 board meeting about a charter school opening where Di Salvo was argumentative. At the next meeting, his wife read an apology letter on his behalf.

"I felt a great deal of sympathy for his spouse to be in a position to make her way to a very public meeting to issue an apology on behalf of her husband," Rossi said. "Part of the apology basically said that he was passionately advocating for his point of view. The apology seemed more of an excuse rather than a heartfelt introspective statement of wrongdoing."

They Did What?

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I'M OUT South Bay Labor boss Ben Field's sudden resignation took many by surprise—perhaps, even, himself.

BEN FOLDS

Ballot measure debacle prompts abrupt exit of prominent local labor leader

BY DAN PULCRANO AND JENNIFER WADSWORTH

LESS THAN A month after a key measure to change San Jose's election dates failed to make it to the fall ballot, South Bay Labor Council CEO Ben Field has stepped down from his post amidst an angry chorus from longtime political allies.

(As Metro went to press, we received a report that Jean Cohen, UA Local Union 393's political director, had been named to replace Field. Visit SanJoseInside.com for updates.)

The leadership change occurred

in the run-up to hotly-contested November local races.

South Bay Labor's member unions and political allies remain divided over a deal to retool the Fair Elections initiative, which would have moved mayoral races to presidential election years, when a larger turnout of infrequent voters gives a labor-friendly candidate an edge at capturing the city's top political office.

Portions of the measure—which campaign filings reveal a labor-funded campaign committee spent \$765,778 to promote in the past year—were incorporated into a

"strong mayor" proposal that the city council voted July 1 to place on the November ballot.

According to sources familiar with the saga, Field cut a deal with San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo via an intermediary.

The accord was seen as beneficial to Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez, who hopes to run to succeed Liccardo in 2024, when her term also ends.

Downtown Councilman Raul Peralez, who has been eyeing a mayoral run in 2022, staunchly opposed the pact, which had been supported by the very San Jose Police Officers' Association to which he once paid dues as a San Jose officer.

Field was reportedly caught off guard by the increasingly independent self-described "Latino coalition," whose five votes he'd assumed would automatically fall into line behind a labor council-negotiated initiative.

"I let him know immediately that