



CITY OF CHICAGO



BYRON SIGCHO-LOPEZ
ALDERMAN, 25TH WARD

20 April 2022

Honorable Andrea R. Wood
Dirksen U.S. Courthouse
219 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 435-5582

**RE: VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT (UNITED STATES V. DANIEL SOLIS,
CASE NO. 22 CR 213)**

Honorable Andrea R. Wood,

I write to provide a victim impact statement on behalf of the residents of the 25th Ward of the City of Chicago as it relates to the case being heard in your court (*United States v. Daniel Solis, Case No. 22 CR 213*.) In my capacity as the duly elected alderperson for the 25th Ward and a member of the Chicago City Council that represents the good people of the 25th Ward, I urge you to consider these words as it relates to the sentencing for the case mentioned above.

We are not alone in our opinion that the detriment and negative effects of the rampant and unchecked corruption throughout the reign of my predecessor should not be ignored despite Mr. Solis' co-operation with the United States Attorney's Office in the pursuit of further charges to others. To the effect that our mayor has intervened in these proceedings speaks volumes to the urgency and import of how the integrity of our institutions must hold strong in the face of corruption and although collaboration was fostered between the defendant the sins of the past should not be washed away.

The harm caused by this corruption is generational. The people of the 25th Ward continue to feel the aftermath. We ask that you please consider the examples below. Although not an exhaustive list, these selections will shed light on the lingering effects of corruption and why it is so important that scaled and appropriate penalties should be considered as the case above comes to a resolution.

- Corruption in zoning decisions under Solis tenure resulted in an unprecedented displacement of over 14,000 low income mainly Mexican and Mexican American residents from the Pilsen community. In a study by the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing showed approximately half of them due to evictions.
- Financial costs and lawsuits. Our office had to deal with at least three lawsuits, and so far, one of them resulted in a settlement with a developer that cost city taxpayers \$12 million dollars, the developer used former Solis corruption scandals to take the city to

court, in a decision that otherwise would have never resulted in a lawsuit because this zoning matter was already approved and legally ratified by city council.

- In another pending legal issue, Solis attempted to lift a liquor moratorium in an area located two blocks away from a local high school and against the will of the residents in the area. This action has been deemed illegal by the city inspector general and this lawsuit is likely to result in another settlement and harm to the residents who live in this area.

- Predatory practices in zoning decisions compromised the economic development of the Chinatown community. Our Chinatown in Chicago is the only Chinatown in the country that continues to grow in population despite of the corrupt zoning practices of the past, but Solis attempted to sell the Chinatown parking lots to a developer that would have had serious consequences for the small businesses in the community and the social fabric of Chinatown.

- In addition, the new 78 development project in Chinatown was not properly discussed nor planned with the Chinatown community and it continues to be a threat to the vibrancy and growth of Chinatown.

- In communities like Barbara Jean Wright, which is a HUD funded housing community, the lack of accountability and oversight allow an absentee landlord to neglect basic infrastructure maintenance that we are still trying to address under a new ownership. The sanitation and safety issues are still felt today.

- Erosion of trust in city government. Under the previous administration, city funded organizations operated and continue to operate under the direction of ComEd and other corporations that were not operating or operate in the best interest of the public but to favor contracts and patronage. We continue to deal with these organizations that are politically active and continue to undermine our efforts to set new processes for city government. Our processes have improved community participation, transparency, and accountability.

For all these reasons we implore you to consider this letter when you hear the case mentioned above. If former Alderman Solis is not held accountable/charged, we feel that our hard work to reform will be undone. ComEd along with other interested parties, as well as lobbyists connected with former Speaker Michael Madigan and former Alderman Daniel Solis will continue to be rewarded with public contracts without any accountability, if convicted parties are perceived to be “let off the hook”. Our community cannot move forward if public sentiment in our institutions wane. We hope you consider these appeals, and that justice can be served so that my community can leave behind this terrible and harmful chapter and strive for a brighter future.

Sincerely,



Byron Sigcho-López
Alderman, 25th Ward