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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
JANET NGUYEN

THIRTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



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June 21, 2024

Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson  
Member of Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring St., Room 450  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilman Harris-Dawson:

I recently read your May 19 Instagram post on oppression and the Vietnam War from the perspective of Malcolm X, Ho Chi Minh and Yuri Kochiyama. While I appreciate your effort to draw connections between historical figures and their struggles against oppression, I must highlight some critical concerns regarding your characterization of Ho Chi Minh (HCM).

As a Vietnamese refugee and California Senator who represents the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam, we deeply oppose any positive portrayal of Ho Chi Minh. He is a communist dictator who was responsible for implementing policies that led to immense suffering, deaths of thousands and exile for countless Vietnamese citizens like my own family.

HCM systematically suppressed freedom of speech, religion and basic human rights, creating a legacy of repression that continues today. His policies were met with fierce resistance and millions of Vietnamese were killed.

Your statement suggesting that HCM's opposition to the Vietnam War was rooted in his experiences of oppression and a desire for peace is inaccurate and deeply troubling. HCM was a tyrant who sought power for himself and aimed to use that power to subjugate the Vietnamese people under Communist rule.

By praising HCM or portraying him as a champion for human rights, you dismiss the suffering of Vietnamese who escaped persecution and sought freedom in the United States and around the world. Although our community has worked hard to rebuild all that was lost during the Vietnam War, HCM's legacy still affects the lives of many today.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to reconsider your comments and rescind any statements that could be interpreted as commendation of HCM's legacy, such as how he "campaigns against oppression." He is a dark figure in world history and should not be remembered as a hero.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am open to further discussion and can provide additional insights into the perspective of Vietnamese Americans on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (714) 374-4000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Janet Nguyen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "N".

**JANET NGUYEN**  
Senator, Thirty-Sixth District  
California State Senate