



To my family, friends, and supporters:

It is with a deep heart and heavy soul that today I announce that I will be suspending my campaign for San Diego City Council District 9. While this decision wasn't taken lightly, I am now sure that it is the right thing to do. I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has stood by my side throughout this journey. It is because of all of you that I have decided this is the best course of action. I have made mistakes; I came forward and owned up to them prior to ever believing I would one day run for office. However, what I never wanted was for my mistakes to impact the incredible work and values of every single person and organization who placed their trust in me.

Now, I would like to give some insight into who I am. Kelvin Barrios the person, not the candidate.

I was born to immigrant parents who had to fight tooth and nail to ensure that me and my siblings would have food on the table most days and a roof over our head. Our 6-person family stuck together. Whether in our 2-bedroom apartment with mildew and asbestos, or when we finally got a slightly bigger house where I was able to turn our tiny attic into the first bedroom I didn't have to share with anyone else. I worked hard all my life. From helping my mom with the houses that she was cleaning, to my summers where I split my times between the tire shop and a local pizza shop, to when I spent countless hours and sleepless nights getting a highly qualified queer woman of color elected to the district I grew up in. She would be the champion we so desperately needed. But then, our now council president, my mentor and former boss made the decision to run for Congress.

I spent the days following her announcement calling up folks in the community - searching for the next person who would represent me, my family, and my community. I met with several qualified women who could take this challenge on. These women, all from different backgrounds and experiences would have been incredible assets to our City Council. While their interest peaked, none of them were able to get on board. When several of them suggested I should do it, I shrugged it off and kept searching.

I would have never imagined that one day I would be granted with the opportunity to truly give back to my community, to listen to them, and amplify their voices. There is no way someone like me, with my upbringing, should. It wasn't until I had one specific conversation, one of those conversations that you can't shake off. I was told – if it can't be me, it must be you. I started making calls, asking people I respected their thoughts on this, but mostly just questioning why I would ever think of doing it.



Then, I did. I pulled papers.

The flood of self-doubt that I'm sure happens to any first-time candidate came rushing in. But what grounded me was the idea that this is my community. District 9 is my home. The struggles I faced; people are still facing. We needed to do something about it, and it needed to be someone who understood what these changes mean for us. We needed someone who didn't just "fall in love" with our neighborhoods as some sort of social experiment, and instead we needed someone that saw the good in it, the potential, but also understood the bad, the gritty, the things that weren't so easy to fall in love with.

Throughout this race I have been hit, morally and mentally, more times than I can even count. And I get it – there were issues, we needed to address them. It seemed like every time I did, we would collectively shift away focus from the real needs of our community. The real struggle and hardships my neighbors are facing became second to the media blitz filled with negativity that just served as a distractor.

That should have never been the goal for anyone in this race, especially during a time when we see disparities heightened and on the surface. Our neighborhoods don't just need a champion, they need justice.

I'm suspending my race because I understand that if I continue, that will only cause for more distractions. We don't need that. My goal is and will continue to be to bring resources and support to everyone in my district; to create opportunities for kids like me that know that sometimes there won't be a warm meal on the table. I ran to work with, and for our district, our working families, our disenfranchised, those whose voices never get heard.

To my family, friends, and supporters, to the district that has raised me, I'm sorry I was not able to do more and be more. However, our work is not done. We have to continue on this fight for justice and representation. I will be with each of you, marching, demanding that we get what we deserve.

For Our Neighborhoods,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelvin Barrios", written in a cursive style.

Kelvin Barrios