

PRESS REPORT

JULY 2025



Cross-country bus opposing 'Big Beautiful Bill' makes Pueblo stop

James Bartolo

The Pueblo Chieftain

USA TODAY NETWORK

A 45-foot bus decorated to look like a \$1 trillion bill arrived at the Pueblo City-County Library District Rawlings Branch on July 9 after previous stops in 23 cities nationwide.

Fair Share America, an advocacy organization championing tax justice, began its bus journey in Croton-On-Hudson, New York, on June 21 and will end the tour in Bakersfield, California, on July 14 as part of the "Stop the Billionaire Giveaway" bus tour opposing the recently approved "One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

While the bus then signed by bill opponents from New York to Thornton, Colorado —I sat empty in the library parking lot in the Pueblo heat, Fair Share America Executive Director Kristen Crowell and four local activists gathered inside the library for a roundtable discussion about the impacts of the bill.

"People will get hurt by this," Crowell said. "There's no nice way to say that. There's no, 'We are going to get a free pass.' There will be harms that happen to families and our neighbors. We need to hold each other up and we need to help each other."

Crowell was joined on the roundtable by Center for Health Progress Co-executive Director Theresa Trujillo, retired nurse Laura Sandoval-Adams, local activist Kevin Abernathy, and Colorado WINS Community and Retiree Organizer Marisa Lopez.

"I'm here because the Medicaid majority is speaking out," Trujillo said. "This law slashes Medicaid. We all know that tens of thousands of kids, seniors and disabled folks will be put off health care — if not now, in years to come — and it will be like death by a million paper cuts."

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to \$1 trillion will be cut from Medicaid within the next 10 years as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Lopez spoke of her experience growing up as the daughter of a single mother. She said that she and her sister were often only able to visit the doctor or dentists because of Medicaid. They were often only able to eat because of programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — a program projected to see a \$267 billion cut, according to USA Today.

"It is very sad to me that there is going to be mothers like mine that are going to be struggling even harder than they already are without that assistance," Lopez said. "It's just going to be gone."

Abernathy spoke about his outreach efforts to speak with Colorado's 3rd Congressional District Rep. Jeff Hurd, a member of the Republican majority that helped the bill pass through the House. Sandoval-Adams spoke to the negative impact of corporate greed on the U.S. healthcare system.

At the end of the roundtable discussion, Trujillo said she and other members of the roundtable plan to "make sure" that community members understand what "has happened to them" as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

"We are going to continue to document what is happening, continue to push back and mitigate the damage that this bill will evidently do," Trujillo said.

Pueblo Chieftain reporter James Bartolo can be reached at JBartolo@gannett.com. Support local news, subscribe to The Pueblo Chieftain at subscribe.chieftain.com.

Pueblo Mayor proposing censure of city councilor following 'discriminatory' remarks

By Michelle Wells

Published: Jul. 22, 2025 at 7:46 AM MDT | Updated: 8 hours ago

PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - Pueblo Mayor Heather Graham is calling for action after a City Council member made comments she claims were "discriminatory."

The comments were made by Councilman Roger Gomez last Monday as City Council was approving new bylaws between the city, the county and the City-County Library.

"This is in the corner of my district and I have people, and I'm not just making this up, I can bring it forward, where they're concerned about when they're going to the library there is a person that's at the front desk, they have some questions about what's a he or a she," Gomez said at the July 14th meeting.

Now Graham is addressing this comment she calls "discriminatory."

Graham tells 11 News, "I'm not sure that people understood the significance of what he said."

Graham continues saying, "And so the next day we started to receive complaints and so we did, in fact, watch and pull the transcript from the City Council meeting on exactly the comments that he did make. And then it started to spread like a wildfire."

Also, Graham says, "Counselor Gomez taking any kind of a stance on you know what we are doing with the library and not doing with the library I think is like terribly inappropriate because it is not something that is directly funded by the City of Pueblo."

So, Graham is demanding something be done about this situation and she tells 11 News, "I have requested that the city attorney's office draft a resolution, that will be on the 28th meeting, asking Mark Aliff in an official president capacity as part of a censureship to censure Counselor Gomez and remove him from work session chair."

Explaining why she believes this is the best course of action, Graham says, "This is the official oath that they take as a city counselor, this was Roger Gomez's official oath and you know he is sworn to the best of his knowledge and ability to maintain an effective service and the city free from partisan, distinction and control so help me God.

"So this is something that he signed when he was brought in as a city counselor, this isn't the first time that somebody has been on the opposing side of Counselor Gomez when it comes to discrimination.

"It's the only action.

"So, the only way to be removed from your seat is if you're recalled or you resign.

"There is nothing in our charter that allows us to hold City Council people or the mayor accountable and actions that they commit, things that they say, things that they do, unless they have some kind of

fiduciary attachment and an ethics complaint filed, but that really has to come down to if you do something with money.

"And so there's really nothing else that we can do.

"He is the work session chair, so in my opinion that is a privileged seat to be on City Council.

"You coordinate all the work sessions, you control and run the meeting every single Monday and so I think that it is appropriate discipline for him to be removed as work session chair for his actions and what he has said to our community members.

"As city councilors, we should not discriminate against our community members.

"And whether it's against women, whether it's against the LGBTQ+ community in which he has offended and who knows how many other people he's offended this seems to be a repetitive pattern.

"We are receiving emails as the day goes on you know these are three different emails that I received just this morning asking for City Council to do something about the comments that he has made.

"I'm sure City Council has received emails. These are just from what we've received.

"We have important things to be doing in the city and there's no time and there's no energy for a council person who continues to discriminate against community members that put him in the position that he's in.

"And it's unfortunate and it's unfortunate that we are having to bring these community members now into this chaos and highlight the actions of one bad person.

"And I would hope that he would know that he does not speak for the City Council as a whole, or the administration as a whole, or the city.

"And it's unfortunate and I hope that City Council supports this resolution that I am bringing forward and that this stops.

"We have complaints, I have even had city staff members, employees who work inside the city, file complaints with HR because they feel uncomfortable with a council person who they have to work with every single day.

"You know that they could potentially be discriminated (against).

"And people are unhappy, and something has to be done."

11 News has reached out to Councilman Gomez multiple times and in multiple ways, but we have not heard back yet.

Graham's resolution will be presented to City Council at the next City Council meeting on Monday, July 28th.

Copyright 2025 KKTV. All rights reserved.

Pueblo Mayor says Councilmember Gomez's inappropriate remarks "aren't far and few between"

By: Noah Caplan

Posted 9:36 PM, Jul 21, 2025

and last updated 10:00 AM, Jul 22, 2025

PUEBLO, Colo. (KOAA) — Remarks made by Councilmember Roger Gomez during a public forum may result in his censure after he made comments about transgender staff members at Rawlings Public Library in Pueblo.

In a public forum meant to discuss appointing library trustees, Gomez said about library staff: "There's a person at the front desk...they have questions about what's a he or she... I just don't feel comfortable supporting this until I get the answers I need."

Pueblo Mayor Heather Graham says this is not the first time Gomez has made remarks she views as inappropriate.

"These comments aren't far and few between. He discriminates against women. He's now discriminating against a protected class and needs to be held accountable," said Graham.

According to Graham and the Executive Director of the Pueblo City-County Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives Nick Potter, Gomez made similar remarks in a recent visit to the library.

"He made the same similar comments to another staff member at the library about a woman on the second floor who had a beard and a man wearing a pink dress on the first floor, wanting to know if they were 'done with rainbow story time,'" said Graham.

Separate from the censure vote, Pueblo library leaders said those comments violated several state and federal anti-discrimination laws, including the recently passed Kelly Loving Act.

"The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Colorado anti-discrimination act, and then also what we're really talking about is medical information for our employees," said Potter.

A censure does not remove Gomez from his position on Council, rather it's a formal vote to show disapproval of his actions. However, comments Gomez made while at the library could result in further consequences. Potter said a repeated offense could result in legal action.

"We really want to serve as a welcoming environment where everyone can access our services," said Potter. "What we're saying is that he will be treated just like anybody else that comes to the library."

We reached out to Councilmember Gomez for comment Monday afternoon. As of Monday evening, he has not responded.

The censure vote will likely happen at the next Pueblo City Council session scheduled for Monday the 28.

Calls to censure Pueblo City Councilor come after comments made about gender identity of library worker

By Michael Logerwell, Paige Reynolds

Published July 18, 2025 10:44 AM

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) - Calls to censure Pueblo City Councilor Roger Gomez are coming after Councilor Gomez's remarks he made before voting against an amended intergovernmental agreement between the Pueblo Library and the city.

Councilor Gomez made the following remarks at [Monday's city council meeting](#):

"This is going to be tough for me to get out, but I'm going to say it anyway. This is in the corner of my district. I have people that, and I'm not just making this up, I can bring it forward, where they're concerned about when they're going to the library. There's a person that's at the front desk. They have some questions about what's a he or she. They're also having questions about library time hours with they can't get enough information. I've tried several times, and I kind of didn't get the answers I needed either. So I'm having a problem with-- I understand the intellectual center, I got it, but it needs to be a family center, too. And when I had to respond, because it's in the corner of my district. I don't know what to tell them so I'm being frank. I just don't feel comfortable supporting this until I get the answers I need."

Now, Councilor Sarah Martinez is calling for leadership on the city council to step up and censure Councilor Gomez.

Councilor Martinez says this isn't a one-off incident, and that Councilor Gomez has gone unpunished for previous inappropriate remarks, such as calling Mayor Heather Graham "Goldilocks" and a "pee pee getting whacked" comment.

Nick Potter with the Pueblo City County Library District tells KRDO13 the remarks by Gomez were uncalled for adding, "We were talking about an idea about appointing and the process for appointing trustees, but he took that as a time to be able to talk about our employees and transgender of employees, specifically working at the library and not making it a family friendly environment...It's really disheartening for us. What we do as a public institution for our community, is serve as an environment where everyone, regardless of background, make up anything, can access information and can explore ideas and connect with community members in a safe way."

The Southern Colorado Equality Alliance is also calling for Councilor Gomez to be censured in a statement obtained by *KRDO13 Investigates*:

"Public libraries are designed to serve everyone. As the American Library Association affirms, "*gender identity and expression have no bearing on a person's ability to provide excellent public service.*" Questioning someone's fitness for public-facing work based on appearance or identity not only promotes discrimination, it undermines our shared values of dignity, inclusion, and fairness..."

"We urge City Council to hold itself to a higher standard—one that affirms the value of all Puebloans and rejects rhetoric that marginalizes our neighbors. We thank Councilors who have consistently stood with Pueblo's LGBTQ+ community and reaffirm our commitment to building a city where everyone feels welcome, safe, and seen."

KRDO13 Investigates is reaching out to Councilor Martinez and Gomez to learn more.

Pueblo councilor could face censure over 'discriminatory' comments on gender identity

James Bartolo

The Pueblo Chieftain, July 22, 2025

Pueblo City Councilor Sarah Martinez has the support of Pueblo Mayor Heather Graham in efforts to censure Councilor Roger Gomez over a recent "discriminatory" statement Gomez made about an individual's gender identity.

Prior to a vote to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Pueblo City-County Library District on July 14, Gomez told Pueblo City Council meeting attendees that his constituents are concerned about an individual who works at the front desk of a local library and "have questions about" whether the individual is "a he or she."

"I understand the intellectual center, I got it, but it needs to be a family center, too... I don't know what to tell them, so I'm being frank," Gomez said. "I just don't feel comfortable supporting this until I get the answers I need."

The Intergovernmental Agreement with the Pueblo City-County Library District, voted on by Pueblo City Council on July 14, continues the established process for selecting members of the library district's board of trustees. Gomez was the only member of council to vote against the ordinance.

Martinez stated in a July 18 Facebook post that she, Graham and Councilor Dennis Flores are supporting a resolution to censure Gomez over his remarks. Martinez also alleged in the post that Gomez went to the Pueblo City-County Library District's Rawlings Branch and "personally harassed" the staff member he referenced in his previous comments.

In a July 17 conversation with the *Chieftain*, Gomez said he also had seen the library employee whom he said constituents were concerned about, and that he was similarly "confused" by the individual's gender expression.

"If that's confusing for me, I wonder how it is for children," Gomez said. "I just have a problem and the way I look at it is, I hope there's no indoctrination."

The *Chieftain* reached out to both Gomez and Martinez on July 18 to seek additional information about the allegation of the library staffer being harassed by Gomez; however, neither city councilor immediately responded to the *Chieftain*.

Pueblo mayor supports censure, calls comments 'unacceptable'

Graham shared a statement with the *Chieftain* on July 18 confirming her support for Gomez's censure. In the statement, Graham said Gomez's July 14 comment was "unacceptable, yet unsurprising." She cited [March 17 email comments](#) shared by Gomez with her Chief of Staff Brian McCain in which Gomez referred to Graham as "Goldilocks" and made a reference to his genitalia.

The March 17 comments were publicly condemned as sexual harassment by Graham during a March 24 meeting.

"Just a few months ago I brought to light Councilor Gomez's discriminatory and predatory behavior through his emails and speech to staff over the last year and a half," Graham wrote in her July 18 statement. "Normally, Councilor Gomez has reserved his unacceptable speech to emails or private conversation, but Monday, July 14 he publicly made it known through his hate speech how harmful he can be."

Graham continued by saying that elected officials have "a duty and responsibility" to represent constituents throughout their community.

"Councilor Gomez has hidden behind his 'opinion,' but his statement was discriminatory and influenced his vote on an IGA which has nothing to do with who works for the City-County Library," Graham wrote.

Martinez emailed council president calling for 'visible, public' action

In addition to her Facebook post, Martinez sent an email on July 16 calling on Pueblo City Council President Mark Aliff to take "visible, public action" in addressing Gomez's July 14 comments. Copies of the email were also sent by Martinez to Graham, McCain, City Attorney Carla Sikes, and Deputy City Attorney Harley Gifford.

"This wasn't a policy critique," Martinez wrote in the email. "It was targeted discrimination. It was a thinly veiled attack on our own constituents based solely on their gender identity. And it has already caused real harm. Since that meeting, I have been contacted by constituents who no longer feel safe or seen in Council chambers. They're asking what this Council is going to do to address the blatant bigotry that was just broadcast from the dais."

Martinez added that Gomez's comments were not "an isolated incident" and referenced the March 17 comments also highlighted in Graham's July 18 statement to the Chieftain.

"I am asking you, as Council President, to take this seriously," Martinez's July 16 email to Aliff reads. "We cannot continue to ignore this behavior. As a governing body, we have a duty to uphold our core values of respect, inclusion, integrity, and accountability. Right now, those values are on the line. Silence is not neutrality — it is permission."

Martinez concluded her email by asking for "an official censure" of Gomez.

"I will not sit by while this Council allows hate and discrimination to go unchecked — particularly because he used it as justification for his vote no," Martinez's email reads.

Library responds, confirms Gomez showed up to library

On July 18, the Pueblo City-County Library District addressed the incident at the library referenced by Martinez in her Facebook post.

The library's statement said Gomez entered a library location on July 17, "inquiring about LGBTQIA+ collections, programs, and transgender library staff."

"At the Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD), we serve every resident — children, families, seniors and individuals of all backgrounds — without regard to personal characteristics," the library's statement

reads. "We remain steadfast in our mission to provide a safe, welcoming environment where everyone can access information, explore ideas, and connect with community resources without restriction or barriers. Our commitment to inclusivity, equity, and privacy guides every decision we make."

Library District Executive Director Sherri Baca said the library's staff are "invaluable for the service they provide to the library district and our community, and they deserve to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity."

"We will not allow any behavior in our libraries that disrespects our team or disrupts library services or operations," Baca said. "As a hub for all residents, we place safety, respect and inclusivity at the heart of everything we do."

The statement outlined the legal and policy structure that protects the library's patrons and employees, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, and the 2025 Kelly Loving Act, in addition to the library's internal policies and procedures on rules of conduct, anti-harassment, and equal employment.

"Councilman Gomez's recent targeted questioning of our staff's identities and challenges to our library materials and collections undermine the inclusive spirit that defines public libraries," the library's statement concluded. "As a public entity, we categorically reject any form of harassment, discrimination, or intimidation to library staff and patrons."

This story was updated to include a statement from the Pueblo City-County Library District

Pueblo Chieftain reporter James Bartolo can be reached at JBartolo@gannett.com. Support local news, subscribe to the Pueblo Chieftain at subscribe.chieftain.com.

Pueblo City Council weighs censure of councilman Roger Gomez over library comments

By Paige Reynolds

Published July 28, 2025 8:03 PM

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) - The Pueblo city council is considering a formal resolution to publicly censure one of its own members.

Councilmember Roger Gomez is under fire over comments he made about a library employee's gender identity.

The resolution, a rare move by a city council, stems from remarks Gomez made during the [July 14 City Council meeting](#) while discussing the Library District Board and future policies for the library system.

"This is going to be tough for me to get out, but I'm going to say it anyway... There's a person at the front desk. They have some questions about what's a he or she... So I'm being frank. I just don't feel comfortable supporting this until I get the answers I need," Gomez said at the time.

Days after the meeting, Gomez visited a library branch to confront the staff and question what type of LGBTQ materials were available to patrons.

Those comments sparked backlash from community groups and city leaders, including Mayor Heather Graham, who accused him of discriminating against members of his community.

If approved, the measure would publicly reprimand Gomez and ask Council President Mark Aliff to remove him from his position as chair of the city council's work sessions. It would not remove him from office.

According to the city's public affairs office, once the agenda item is called, Gomez will be allowed to make a statement and then must leave the room while the remaining council members discuss and vote on the resolution.

When the proposal first surfaced, Gomez released a statement to KRDO defending his actions and claiming the criticism was motivated by his political adversaries.

"This whole thing was choreographed by Councilor Sarah Martinez who was furious with me because I voted down a council contingency she put forward that I voted down because it was going to one of the best financed non profits in the city that also happened to be operated by relative. First of all she should have used beeper judgement and not bring it forward in the first place let alone refusing to abstain from voting. Unfortunately for her the majority also voted down her request. Hence the following onslaught and another character assignation against me through the known and ousted collusion efforts of her and the mayor. If you recall Sarah Martinez (democrat) was publicly rebuked and censured for providing the candidate for mayor Graham (republican) with internal democratic voting lists. This is just another vindictive and completely created scenario because I have and will continue to stand up against the mayor and Sarah when I disagree with them. More importantly I will continue bringing inquiries forward

by the constituents who I represent no matter how uncomfortable or intolerant or it may be conceived by special interest groups who have their own agendas.... rog," Gomez wrote.

At the time of this publication, the city council had not yet reached the resolution item to discuss it.

Pueblo City Council votes not to censure councilor

By [Michelle Wells](#)

Published: Jul. 29, 2025 at 11:31 AM MDT

PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - After well over an hour and a half of discussion and public forum at Monday night's Pueblo City Council meeting, the resolution to censure Councilman Roger Gomez failed by a vote of 3-3.

In his statement ahead of the vote, Councilor Gomez called his remarks at the July 14th City Council meeting, "greatly exaggerated," and "misinterpreted."

Gomez also said in the meeting this was a "... character assassin attempt to silence me."

Additionally, Gomez mentioned during the meeting his grandson, Mikey Soto is, "... part of the Pueblo gay community along with 10 other family members including two transgender members as well."

Stating he has nothing but love for his grandson, Mikey, and Mikey's partner, Gomez also said at the meeting, "For the record, there is absolutely no truth to any allegations that have any, that I have any bias or prejudice toward members of the Pueblo's LGB community.

"I simply went to the library requesting information on some of their program.

"At no time, did I insult, or berate, or cause... any kind of confrontations with any of the library staff.

"Furthermore, absolutely no proof of these false and fabricated allegations has been produced no substantiated by anyone, including the city officials, by making these.

"... I also feel very strongly about the needs of my district and all my constituents and I have tried my very best to improve the entire community of Pueblo both in politics and as a past long-term member of a law enforcement community.

"I understand that politics mean dirty business, but I do draw the line when untruthful and unsubstantiated statement are made against me for political gain.

"Furthermore, I have not been afforded even a shred of due process to confront the non-existent evidence of what I'm being wrongly accused of.

"Instead there has been a rushed judgement by certain individuals who clearly have ulterior motives.

"The majority of my fellow City Council members understand who I am.

"And I trust that they will require at least a minimum that I be afforded the benefits of the doubt given the total lack of evidence for what I'm being accused of by a small group of disenchanted and biased individuals who wish to silence my voice."

In a phone conversation Gomez had with 11 News on Monday, he tells us, "This is a political hatchet job done by people who want me out because I challenge them in reference to their voting and the positions they take."

Gomez also stated in the phone call he was just trying to understand how to best handle a question his constituent asked him.

At the City Council meeting on July 14th, Councilor Gomez said, "This is going to be tough for me to get out, but I'm going to say it anyway, this is in the corner of my district, I have people that, and I'm not just making this up, I can bring it forward, where they're concerned about when they're going to the library there is a person that's at the front desk they have some questions about whether it's a he or a she..."

These are the remarks which led to Pueblo Mayor Heather Graham proposing a censure for Councilor Gomez.

The resolution Mayor Graham presented to City Council on Monday would have limited Gomez's responsibilities as a councilor. Graham was also asking City Council President Mark Aliff to remove Gomez as Chairman of the Work Session.

Mayor Graham spoke with 11 News in an interview last week and during that interview she told us, "I'm not sure that people understood the significance of what he said and so the next day we started to receive complaints.

Graham continues saying, "And so we did go, in fact, watch and pull the transcript from the City Council meeting on exactly the comments that he did make.

"And then it started to spread like a wildfire.

"From what I gather, he was telling the rest of City Council and the public that he has received inquiries from his constituents about individuals who work at the library and whether these individuals, because his constituents are unaware of when they are approaching them whether they are he's or she's, specifically talking about transgender individuals who work for the library.

"It was then followed up by a library visit that he did later on in the week.

"I was contacted by the head of the library, she reported to me that Councilor Gomez had did something to the fact of going into the library, talking with whoever was at the front desk, talking about the woman on the second floor who has a beard And the gentleman on the first floor who was wearing a pink dress.

"So not only was an opinion made at the City Council meeting on the dius, in his public official capacity, he then proceeded to go to the library later in the week and was having the same types of conversations with the individual at the library.

"Councilor Gomez taking any kind of a stance on, you know, what we are doing with the library and not doing with the library I think is like terribly inappropriate because it is not something that is directly funded by the City of Pueblo."

Also, Mayor Graham tells 11 News, "This is a pattern with Councilor Gomez.

"These conversations I'm sure exist outside of being on the dius, it's unprofessional.

"It's not what I think a city councilor should be doing and I think that you should be in trouble for the way that you treat people, your actions, what you say up on the dius, especially when it comes to... discrimination on a class of individuals, a protected class of individuals."

As far as why she felt this was the appropriate action to take, Mayor Graham says, "There's really nothing else that we can do.

"He is the work session chair, so in my opinion, that is a privileged seat to be on City Council.

"You coordinate all the work sessions, you control and run the meeting every single Monday and so I think that it is appropriate discipline for him to be removed as work session chair for his actions and what he has said to our community members.

"As city councilors, we should not discriminate against our community members.

"And whether it's against women, whether it's against the LGBTQ+ community in which he has offended and who knows how many other people he's offended, this seems to be a repetitive pattern.

"We are receiving emails as the day goes on, you know, these are three different emails that I received just this morning asking for City Council to do something about the comments that he has made.

"We have important things to be doing in the city and there's just, there's no time and there's no energy for a council person who continues to discriminate against community members that put him in the position that he's in and it's unfortunate and it's unfortunate that we are having to bring these community members now into this chaos and highlight the actions of one bad person.

"And I would hope that he would know that he does not speak for the City Council as a whole, or the administration as a whole, or the city and it's unfortunate and I hope that City Council supports this resolution that I am bringing forward and that this stops.

"We have complaints, I have even had city staff members, employees who work inside the city, file complaints with HR because they feel uncomfortable with a council person who they have to work with every single day, you know, that they could potentially be discriminated (against).

"And people are unhappy and something has to be done."

Because the question Gomez was asking for his constituent pertained to employees at the Rawlings Library, 11 News also spoke with Executive Director of the Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives Nick Potter.

Regarding Councilor Gomez saying he was just stating an inquiry he had received from one of his constituents, Potter tells 11 News, "So really that kind of doesn't matter."

Potter continues saying, "Councilor Gomez really needs to understand that there's federal and state laws, as well as internal policies that govern how he finds information out, whether it's for himself or for a constituent."

On their website, the Pueblo City-County Library District issued a [statement](#), which also lists the laws and policies they say Gomez violated.

Since this incident, Potter tells 11 News how library employees have been impacted, saying, "We're a place for everyone and our staff is seeing that we're standing strong in that."

"It's not a place for a select few. It's a place for everybody to come here, share ideas that may be ideas and information that you as a person don't agree with."

"However, a civil discourse in following state and federal laws, as well as our internal policies and code of conduct, that's something that's important for an institution, a public institution like a library to be able to stand and serve all citizens.

"The other thing that I think our staff are seeing is really a little bit disheartening in terms of what's coming out from our city leader and coming in a position of authority and questioning our staff about their medical information.

"You know, I think that we really stand strong in the ideals of what libraries are.

"Again we're a public space that's open to anybody.

"You may come here and see information that you either completely agree with and you side with.

"You may see information that you don't agree with and you don't understand and that's what libraries do is that they provide mirrors that reflect you, they provide windows so you can see through to see other people and it may not be your way of life, but through respect, through mutual understanding and through a civil discourse, that's really what we are standing at and what we're doing.

"We are standing in a very black-and-white space.

"So where this is very black and white, it comes to the law and it comes to federal, state law, as well as library internal policy that we're covered by and all of those things are put in place to keep our patrons, as well as our community safe and our staff safe while they're in the library exploring all the great things that libraries have to offer."

When it comes to the result they were looking for as far as the City Council meeting goes, Potter says, "You know, I think at the end of the day we hope that cooler heads prevail.

"We hope that people understand the laws that libraries abide by and the rules that libraries abide by so that we can provide the best possible public library experience to our community.

"So that's really all we hope for we hope that everybody can kind of go back to a place where we can have good civil discourse.

"We can come into a library share ideas and information and leave as friends."

Pueblo City Council deadlocks on Gomez censure vote amid transphobia allegations

July 29, 2025

By Pueblo Watch Staff and Bobby McDonald

Filed in: [Accountability](#), [News](#)

Bobby McDonald attended the meeting on behalf of the Pueblo Star Journal. He is concluding his summer internship through Pueblo Community College and we look forward to having Bobby's voice as part of our community storytelling and reporting.

Pueblo City Council failed to pass a resolution Monday night to censure Councilman Roger Gomez, following heated allegations of transphobic comments and targeted behavior toward public library staff. The 3–3 vote exposed deep divisions in city leadership and drew emotional reactions from community members in attendance.

The controversy centers on two incidents: Gomez's July 14 comments during a City Council meeting and a subsequent visit to a library branch on July 17, during which he reportedly questioned LGBTQIA+ programs, collections, and the gender identity of library employees. A July 17 incident report and multiple HR complaints have been filed, according to Mayor Heather Graham.

"This outrage is about Councilor Gomez's ongoing behavior," Graham said during the meeting. "Roger Gomez brings embarrassment to city government."

Library employee Lev Frank, a staff member at Pueblo City-County Library District and representative of Pueblo Pride, delivered a powerful statement during public comment. "Hello, I am one of the staff members that Gomez made transphobic comments about — me and one of my co-workers," Frank said. "He misgendered me and my coworker, calling my coworker an 'it.' Because he has a position on this council and because he has this platform, he went out of his way to target my coworker and myself."

Frank concluded with a defense of the library's mission. "The thing about libraries is they are for everyone. Show up as you are, and you are welcome as you are. That inherent acceptance and goal of community care is what libraries can be. If you value community, you value the library."

Frank's comments were met with loud applause.

Councilor Joe Latino spoke next, casting doubt on the severity of the claims. "It's your word against his," he said, addressing Frank. "There's an interpretation of what was said and what was heard." His remarks drew frustration from the gallery.

Councilor Sarah Martinez responded forcefully. She played a video clip showing Gomez making comments he had previously denied. She also held up the July 17 incident report and addressed the nature of the allegations.

"He hasn't taken accountability," Martinez said. "The employee isn't lying. This isn't one word against another. The library isn't even under city control."

Councilor Regina Maestri defended Gomez and criticized the audience's response to Latino. She referenced a family member who identifies as a "stud" and said, "Now we are doing public shaming over a question. I don't agree with what he said, but I don't think it's damning either."

Tensions escalated when a community member in the audience shouted, "He called me a man in a dress." Council President Mark Aliff ordered the chambers cleared at 11:33 p.m. but reversed the decision minutes later, inviting the public back in.

At 11:38 p.m., the video clip was played again, revealing Gomez discussing the gender identity of a library staff member and criticizing the library's Rainbow Reading Hour. The footage directly contradicted his earlier denials.

"This is a no-win," Aliff said after the clip played. "When does a council member stop being a citizen? Do we want to live in a community where you can't say anything to anybody? So now you're mad. We will never agree on this."

The vote followed at 11:46 p.m. Martinez, Flores, and Mayor Graham (by endorsement) voted to censure Gomez. Maestri, Latino, and Aliff voted against. The resolution failed in a 3-3 tie.

The Pueblo City-County Library District released a formal statement on July 18, confirming that Gomez had inquired about LGBTQIA+ programs and staff during his July 17 visit and asserting that such behavior is not tolerated in their facilities. "We will not allow any behavior in our libraries that disrespects our team or disrupts library services or operations," said PCCLD Executive Director Sherri Baca.

The library district also noted that it operates independently from the City of Pueblo and is bound by state and federal anti-discrimination laws, including the Civil Rights Act, the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, and the 2025 Kelly Loving Act, which specifically addresses protections for transgender individuals.

The Southern Colorado Equality Alliance also issued a statement condemning Gomez's comments and urging the City Council to adopt higher standards. "Remarks like these are not just inappropriate—they're harmful," the statement read. "They perpetuate stigma and send a message that some members of our community do not belong in public spaces."

As the meeting adjourned without disciplinary action, many in the audience vowed to continue demanding accountability. The next City Council meeting is expected to draw continued scrutiny.

Editor's Note: This article is part of [Pueblo Watch](#), a Pueblo Star Journal initiative focused on government transparency and civic accountability.

Gomez narrowly escapes censorship

By J. CASAÑA

La Cucaracha News

July 29, 2025

In the July 28 meeting of Pueblo City Council, in a close vote chose not to censure Councilmember Roger Gomez (District 4) for his recent discriminatory comments and actions regarding trans and nonbinary employees in the local library district.

The vote was 3-3, with Councilmembers Boston, Flores, and Martinez voting to censure, and Councilmembers Aliff, Latino, and Maestri voting against.

This vote came despite the public outcry against Councilmember Gomez's behavior. The council chamber was packed with people, the majority wearing pride-themed clothes or bearing rainbow-colored fans to demonstrate their support for the LGBTQ+ community. Many more had been gathered outside City Hall before the meeting. There, they called a censure and for Gomez to

As the Council's work session began at 5:30 p.m. inside City Hall, about a hundred citizens were gathered in the parking lot outside in support of Pueblo's LGBTQ+ inhabitants. This rally opened with spirited chants, which included "Hey hey! Ho ho! Roger Gomez has got to go!" and "Get up, get down, Pueblo is a queer town!" There were multiple calls for Gomez to resign, not only for his recent discriminatory comments but also for his regular unprofessionalism and his own statements that he finds serving on city council to be "difficult" and "tiring."

This is not the first time Councilmember Gomez has faced potential censure. Earlier this year, a call for censure was initiated by Mayor Heather Graham after he made repeated inappropriate and unprofessional comments in official correspondence. Then in the July 14 meeting of City Council, Gomez made ignorant, transphobic, and discriminator statements about specific library workers, and only a few days later went to the public library to, allegedly, harass those same workers.

Ahead of a vote on an intergovernmental agreement between the city and the library district, Gomez derailed conversation to address the presence of trans and nonbinary workers in the Rawlings library. According to Gomez, his constituents have concerns about an individual at the front desk and "have questions about whether the individual is a he or a she."

"[The library] needs to be a family center," continued Gomez. "I just don't feel comfortable supporting (this agreement) until I get the answers I need."

The intergovernmental agreement being voted on had nothing to do with the policies or hiring practices at the library. It was a continuation of the existing procedure for selecting members of the library district's board of trustees.

"If that's confusing for me, I wonder how it is for children," Gomez said in a comment to the Chieftain, referring to trans identity. "I just have a problem and the way I look at it is, I hope there's no indoctrination." He also referred to a library employee as a "man in a dress" and said she was "obviously a man" in comments in a radio interview.

Mayor Graham commented to the Pueblo Chieftain that Gomez's comments were "unacceptable, yet unsurprising."

Councilmember Sarah Martinez (District 3) also spoke out against Gomez's behavior. She released an open letter to Council President Mark Aliff requesting that a resolution to formally censure Gomez.

"This wasn't a policy critique, it was targeted discrimination. It was a thinly veiled attack on our own constituents based solely on their gender identity," said Martinez in her statement.

The Pueblo City-County Library District recently confirmed the rumor that on July 17, only days after his comments in the chamber, Councilmember Gomez entered Rawlings library to "inquire about LGBTQIA+ collections, programs, and transgender library staff." Councilmember Martinez and others have alleged that during that visit Gomez also harassed the trans employee(s) he referred to in his discriminatory comments. Two members of library staff have filed a formal incident report regarding his behavior, which was read aloud in the meeting.

"He hasn't taken any accountability at all," said Martinez after this presentation, "I wish I was making it up. This is about an elected official using their position and title to discriminate. Real leadership means owning the impact of our actions, standing up and not shrinking away when something crosses the line."

Three of her fellow councilmembers were not swayed by the presentation of Gomez's actions and recordings of his words. Councilmember Joe Latino (District 2) insisted that it was "(the employee's) word against his" while Councilmember Regina Maestri (District 1) expressed that this call for censure was "reverse hate" and an example of the "garbage" frequently encountered by city council.

"I didn't see anything dangerous or disturbing," said Maestri, referring to Gomez's behavior. "Council is now being held 'accountable'" —she gave finger quotes around this word— "based on what we're going to decide here tonight. I don't think anybody would think their rights override Mister Gomez's rights. When we start censuring over things that are very overdramatically exaggerated, who's next?"

Council President Mark Aliff (At Large) sidestepped the issue by saying it ultimately came down to a question of Freedom of Speech.

"Does a councilor have a right to question, like any politician or person in the community, have a right to ask questions?" he asked. He went on to suggest that the right to ask questions is what separated the United States from "Communist" governments, before going on to assert he had no power over other city councilors.

"They were elected just as I was elected," said Aliff.

Before excusing himself from council chambers ahead of the vote, Councilmember Gomez announced his intention to retain his seat for the remainder of his term. There is also no formal code of conduct for Councilmembers, and censure is the most serious punishment one can be issued by council.

Gomez's seat will be up for election in November of 2027.

Despite protests, Pueblo city councilor avoids censure over alleged 'transphobic' comments

James Bartolo

The Pueblo Chieftain

Tue, July 29, 2025 at 1:05 PM MDT

An effort to censure Pueblo City Councilor Roger Gomez failed to receive enough support from council members despite roughly 100 people showing up to protest outside Pueblo City Hall on July 28.

A successful censure would have included removing Gomez from his leadership position as work session chair. Censure efforts, spearheaded by Councilor Sarah Martinez and supported by Pueblo Mayor Graham, followed a [July 14 statement](#) in which Gomez said his constituents had expressed anxieties about a library employee's gender identity and stated that the library should be "a family center."

The Pueblo City-County Library District reported to city staff that Gomez also visited the library on July 17 to inquire about "LGBTQIA+ collections, programs, and transgender library staff," according to a city of Pueblo background paper.

Protestors crowded City Hall at 5 p.m. while waving rainbow folding fans in the 98-degree heat and calling for Gomez to be censured. By 7 p.m., city council chambers were packed to capacity. Many protestors stayed until the end of the meeting — around 11:45 p.m. — to hear the result of Pueblo City Council's vote on the censure and a citizen-filed ethics complaint against Gomez. The ethics complaint also failed to pass.

Local librarian says Gomez's comments were 'transphobic and dehumanizing'

Lev Frank, a local librarian, told members of council before the censure vote that he and another co-worker received transphobic comments from Gomez.

"The incident report of this is public record... He misgendered me and my coworker repeatedly, and he used dehumanizing language — calling my co-worker an 'it,'" Frank said.

"His conduct has also made me materially unsafe... It's not just because his comments were cruel, transphobic and dehumanizing, but because anybody who wants to cause me or my co-worker harm now knows exactly where to find me."

Frank was one of five individuals who made a public comment in favor of censuring Gomez shortly before the July 28 vote.

Pueblo City Councilman Roger Gomez reads a statement denying claims of prejudice toward the LGBTQ+ community on July 28, 2025.

Mayor: Gomez's conduct has 'brought embarrassment' to city council

Graham also delivered a statement. In addition to referring to Gomez's July comments as "discrimination," the mayor referred to [March 17 email comments](#) made by Gomez about Graham as "sexual harassment."

"His conduct, both in the public and behind closed doors, has brought embarrassment to the city council and dysfunction to our city government," Graham said. "He should not have a leadership role in this council. This resolution before you is to remove him as work session chair, which is a privilege as a stepped-up position to represent this City Council."

Gomez defends comments, censure effort fails

City Council President Mark Aliff and Councilors Joe Latino and Regina Maestri were the three council members who voted against censuring Gomez. Martinez and Councilors Brett Boston and Dennis Flores voted in favor of censure. A majority was needed for the censure to pass.

While Gomez recused himself from voting, he did read a statement prior to the vote in which he said there was "no truth" in allegations of his prejudice toward the LGBTQ+ community and that he did not at any time "insult" or "berate" library staff.

"Furthermore, absolutely no proof of these false and fabricated allegations has been produced nor substantiated by anyone, including the city officials who are making these spurious claims," Gomez said in his statement. "The behavior that has been attributed to me in the media is nothing more than rumors and innuendo and unsubstantiated hearsay."

In addition to reading transcripts from Gomez's July 14 statement questioning a library employee's gender identity and an incident report describing events that took place on July 17, council reviewed audio clips from an interview that Gomez did with KOYC Radio.

In the interview, Gomez described going to the library and seeing a person whom he wasn't sure "what he was looking at," and that children may get "confused" by the person's gender identity.

Pueblo City Councilman Roger Gomez will not be censured after ordinance fails

By: James Gavato

Posted 12:02 AM, Jul 29, 2025

updated 6:43 AM, Jul 29, 2025

PUEBLO, Colo. (KOAA) — Pueblo City Councilman Roger Gomez will not be censured. Pueblo City Council voted Monday on an ordinance to censure him, and the vote was split three to three.

You can see how each Pueblo City Council member voted below:

In Favor of Censure:

- Sarah Martinez (District 3)
- Dennis Flores (At Large)
- Brett Boston (At Large)

Against Censure:

- Regina Maestri (District 1)
- Joe Latino (District 2)
- Mark Aliff (President - At Large)

Did Not Vote Due to Conflict of Interest:

- Gomez (District 4)

Councilman Gomez made a statement before public comment and the vote, saying his "comments were greatly exaggerated and misinterpreted," this was part of "Councilwoman Martinez and Mayor (Heather) Graham's despicable and vindictive tactics," and he is being "falsely accused."

Background Information

Remarks made by Councilman Gomez during a public forum could have resulted in his censure after he made comments about transgender staff members at Rawlings Public Library in Pueblo.

In a public forum meant to discuss appointing library trustees, Gomez said about library staff: "There's a person at the front desk...they have questions about what's a he or she... I just don't feel comfortable supporting this until I get the answers I need."

Pueblo Mayor Heather Graham says this is not the first time Gomez has made remarks she views as inappropriate.

"These comments aren't far and few between. He discriminates against women. He's now discriminating against a protected class and needs to be held accountable," said Graham.

According to Graham and the Executive Director of the Pueblo City-County Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives Nick Potter, Gomez made similar remarks in a recent visit to the library.

"He made the same similar comments to another staff member at the library about a woman on the second floor who had a beard and a man wearing a pink dress on the first floor, wanting to know if they were 'done with rainbow story time,'" said Graham.

Separate from the censure vote, Pueblo library leaders said those comments violated several state and federal anti-discrimination laws, including the recently passed Kelly Loving Act.

"The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Colorado anti-discrimination act, and then also what we're really talking about is medical information for our employees," said Potter.

A censure would not have removed Gomez from his position on Council, rather it's a formal vote to show disapproval of his actions. However, comments Gomez made while at the library could result in further consequences. Potter said a repeated offense could result in legal action.