

CONCERNS REGARDING THE CANDIDACY OF TRACY LA

Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Education — Trustee Area 4

August 21, 2026

To: Rep. Lou Correa
Rep. Derek Tran
Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento
DPOC Chairwoman Florice Hoffman
Former Councilmember Thu-Ha Nguyen
Councilmember Thai Viet Phan
GGUSD Trustee Walter Muneton
SAUSD President Katelyn Brazer Aceves
Executive Committee Members of the Democratic Party of Orange County

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We write as Vietnamese American educators, parents, and community members/leaders to express our opposition to the candidacy of Ms. Tracy La for Trustee Area 4 of the Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Education and to bring to your attention the serious concerns underlying our position.

Our concerns arise principally from the public presentation of two exceptionally sensitive chapters of Vietnamese history: **the August Revolution of 1945 and April 30, 1975.**

The August Revolution and Vietnam's Struggle for Independence

VietRISE's educational series, *The August Revolution: Vietnam's Fight for Freedom*, presents the August Revolution as the culmination of Vietnam's struggle against colonial rule. It describes Hồ Chí Minh and others as founding the Việt Minh in 1941 and concludes with Hồ Chí Minh's September 2, 1945 declaration of Vietnamese independence.

We do not object to teaching the August Revolution, Hồ Chí Minh, or the Việt Minh. They are important parts of Vietnamese history and should be studied.

Our concern is one of **historical context and balance.**

Vietnam's resistance to French colonialism did not begin with Hồ Chí Minh or the Việt Minh. It extended across generations and included monarchs, nationalist leaders, political organizations,

religious communities, and countless ordinary Vietnamese. Figures and movements such as Emperor Thành Thái, Emperor Duy Tân, Phan Đình Phùng, Phan Bội Châu, Nguyễn Thái Học and the Việt Nam Quốc Dân Đảng, among others, participated in anticolonial resistance long before the August Revolution.

Hồ Chí Minh's proclamation of independence on September 2, 1945 was unquestionably an important historical event. But delivering a declaration of independence should not be confused with the entirety of Vietnam's decades-long struggle to achieve independence.

The events immediately following the declaration demonstrate why this distinction matters. In March 1946, Hồ Chí Minh's government entered into an agreement with France under which French forces were permitted to enter northern Vietnam to replace Chinese Nationalist forces, while France recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a "free state" within the French Union. Armed conflict with France subsequently resumed, and the struggle against French colonial power continued until 1954.

VietRISE itself acknowledges that its educational series intentionally concludes in 1945 and does not examine the political developments, conflicts, or historical events that followed.

That limitation is precisely why we believe context matters. Individual statements in a historical presentation may be accurate while the overall presentation can still leave readers with an incomplete understanding when important preceding and subsequent events are omitted.

April 30, 1975: "Reunification Day" and Black April

Our second concern involves terminology surrounding April 30, 1975.

In an LAist article published on April 30, 2025, the reporter wrote: "**Black April, or as La calls it, Reunification Day...**" We recognize that this wording is LAist's attribution to Ms. La rather than a direct quotation appearing in the article, and we believe it is important to characterize the source accurately.

For many Vietnamese refugee families, however, describing April 30 primarily as "Reunification Day" carries profound historical implications.

For us, April 30 is remembered as **Black April — Tháng Tư Đen**.

The Communist victory was followed by the detention and reeducation of large numbers of former South Vietnamese military personnel, government officials, and others; profound economic and social upheaval; displacement; loss of homes and livelihoods; and an enormous refugee exodus.

These events are not distant history for many families in Orange County. Parents and grandparents in our community experienced imprisonment, separation from loved ones, loss of

property and livelihood, dangerous journeys by sea, refugee camps, and ultimately the difficult process of rebuilding their lives in the United States.

That is why terminology matters.

Two people may legitimately interpret a historical event differently. But educational treatment of an event carrying such profound consequences should acknowledge those different experiences rather than allow one political interpretation to stand as the complete history.

Why This Matters to Us

Our concern is not about preventing discussion of Hồ Chí Minh, the Việt Minh, the August Revolution, or competing interpretations of the Vietnam War. Education should expose students to difficult historical questions and encourage them to examine evidence and competing perspectives.

Our concern is particularly significant because Ms. La is seeking responsibility for public education in a school district serving a substantial Vietnamese American population.

A school-board trustee must serve families with many different histories, experiences, and political viewpoints. Vietnamese American parents and educators should therefore be able to expect that the history of their families and community will be approached with **accuracy, balance, intellectual openness, and respect for their lived experiences.**

Vietnamese Americans are not politically or intellectually monolithic, and we do not claim to speak for every Vietnamese American.

We do, however, speak for ourselves.

As Vietnamese American educators, parents, refugees, and community members, we oppose the candidacy of Ms. Tracy La for Trustee Area 4 of the Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Education because of our concerns regarding historical balance, educational judgment, and sensitivity toward the experiences of Vietnamese refugee families.

We respectfully ask that our concerns, VietRISE's original educational materials, the relevant independent reporting, and the broader historical record all be carefully reviewed.

Our request is ultimately a simple one: **when Vietnamese history is discussed in the context of public education, the experiences of those who fought colonialism before 1945 and those who lost their country and became refugees after 1975 should not disappear from the story.**

For your review, we have attached VietRISE's original August Revolution educational materials and the relevant LAist reporting, including Ms. La's own explanation of VietRISE's

presentation. We encourage you to review these materials in their entirety so that our concerns—and Ms. La’s response to those concerns—can be evaluated from the underlying record.

Respectfully submitted,

**Vietnamese American Educators, Parents, Refugees & Community Members
Orange County, California**

Each signatory signs solely in an individual capacity and not on behalf of any organization unless expressly indicated otherwise.

Name	Title	Organization
Mr. Thieu Vo	Member of the Board of Directors	Vietnamese Culture Center
Ms. Hue Pham	Member	Vietnamese American Educators of Southern California
Mr. Huy T Nguyen	Director	Vietnam Worker Defenders
Ms. Holly Le	Member	Vietnamese American Educators of Southern California
Ms. Bea Nguyen	Member	Vietnamese Historical & Cultural Foundation
Ms. Janie M. Dam, JD, EdD.	Member	Vietnamese American Educators of Southern California
Ms. Phuong Le	Advisor	Vietnamese American Educators of Southern California
Ms. Van-Anh Hoang	Member	Vietnamese American Educators of Southern California
Ms. My-Dung Le	Regional Coordinator	Hung Vuong Program
Mr. Do-Phu Nguyen	Member	Vietnamese American Democratic Club
Mr. Dung T Tran	President	Democracy For Vietnam

Supporting Materials

Attachment A: VietRISE — “*The August Revolution: Vietnam’s Fight for Freedom*”

Attachment B: LAist — April 30, 2025 article concerning Black April and the Fall of Saigon

Attachment C: LAist — October 8, 2025, “*Westminster slams VietRISE’s August Revolution post as ‘communist propaganda’*”