



CITY COUNCIL  
Linda Maio

CONSENT CALENDAR  
November 18, 2014

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Council Members Linda Maio and Susan Wengraf

SUBJECT: Referral to the Commission of the Status of Women: Letter of Support for the Work of Anita Sarkeesian

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer the issue to the Commission of the Status of Women of sending a letter of support to Anita Sarkeesian's organization Feminist Frequency, in support of her work, and her campaign against misogyny and the harassment of women.

BACKGROUND:

Anita Sarkeesian is a Canadian-American feminist, media critic and blogger. She is the author of the video blog "Feminist Frequency" and the video series *Tropes vs. Women* and *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, which examine the depiction of women in popular culture. Sarkeesian is at the center of discussions about misogyny in video game culture. She studies gender perceptions in video games and speaks publicly about problems she perceives in the industry and culture.

In 2014, she became the subject of terrorist threats against her planned lecture at Utah State University, which made international headlines. Sarkeesian was forced to cancel her speech after the school received an email threatening to carry out "the deadliest shooting in American history" at the event.

Sarkeesian canceled the talk after being told that under Utah law, campus police could not prevent people from bringing guns.

Sarkeesian writes and speaks to expose misogyny, sexism and violence against female characters in video games, despite repeated physical threats. She notes, "Online harassment, especially gendered online harassment, is an epidemic. Women are being driven out, they're being driven offline; this isn't just in gaming, this is happening across the board online."

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Commission staff time.

CONTACT:

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