

California State Senate

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SENATOR
THOMAS J. UMBERG
THIRTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
ELECTIONS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
CHAIR
BUDGET AND FISCAL REVIEW
HOUSING
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION
VETERANS AFFAIRS
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4

July 9, 2019

Re:

Mayor Garcia, Second District Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, and all Long Beach City Councilmembers;

I am writing today in support of the Long Beach Main Library being named in honor of Long Beach native, Billie Jean King. I believe that naming the library after Billie Jean King would be a befitting tribute. Ms. King has made her mark the world over as a first-rate athlete, and civil rights leader. She has been a champion on the tennis court, and has continued to be a champion for women's equality and the LGBTQ movement for decades. Reviewing the list of her accomplishments is truly inspirational, and naming the library in her honor will encourage future generations to learn her story.

Billie Jean King's story is Long Beach's story. Her life, and its successes, are rooted in the community. She talks about being from Long Beach often when interviewed. In fact, on her first trip to Wimbledon, she relied on donations from the Long Beach Century Club, and went door-to-door asking for donations from the residents of Long Beach to assist her in funding the trip. At California State University, Los Angeles, Ms. King studied history, and worked two jobs because she had no scholarship. This adversity would inspire her to fight for her successes, and continue to work hard. I believe it is also that adversity that led Ms. King to social activism on and off the court, as she wanted to help others that face adversity.

She co-founded World Team Tennis, the only professional, co-ed team sports league, in 1974. That same year, she also co-founded *Women Sports* magazine and started the Women's Sports Foundation which is dedicated to creating leaders by providing girls access to sports and to defending Title IX in lawsuits. That was only the start of her social activism. In 2014, she founded the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative, a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the critical issues required to achieve diverse, inclusive leadership in the workforce.

Ms. King is certainly worthy of the honor of having her name on the library. The privilege of having her name on a city building could glean benefits for the City of Long Beach, as well. The library could act as a tourist attraction and revenue source, with even a modest display of King memorabilia included. I believe that this naming will encourage people to wonder about her, research her contributions to societal issues, inspire others to adopt her champion spirit, and

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perhaps encourage our youth to take up the torch of civil rights. Thank you for bringing this item to the Council, and thank you for considering my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T. Umberg".

THOMAS J. UMBERG
State Senator, 34th District