



Written by [Larry Elder](#) on February 3, 2022

Los Angeles Times Slams “Vitriol in Politics” — After Hiring Vitriolic Columnists

There’s an old joke about the convicted defendant who, after killing his parents, asked the judge for leniency because, after all, the murderer is now an orphan. A recent editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* is not quite the same. But it’s close.

Here’s the headline: “The Vitriol in Politics Is Driving Good People Out of Public Service.” The editorial laments the decision by a Los Angeles City two-term councilman, who, after taking several constituent-displeasing positions, decided not to run for reelection. Those positions include voting against an ordinance to declare certain public streets and public areas off-limits to the homeless and voting to cut the city police budget and redirect the money for “youth programs.” What’s not to like in a city plagued by rising homelessness and homicides (up 50% since 2019)?



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But the point here is not to attack or defend the councilman’s policy positions. The point is the hypocrisy of the Times in denouncing the “vitriol in politics” that supposedly drove him to decide against running for reelection.

Some nerve. This is a newspaper that hired columnist Erika D. Smith who, when I ran in the election to recall California Gov. Gavin Newsom, wrote a column with the headline: “Larry Elder Is the Black Face of White Supremacy. You’ve Been Warned.” Smith wrote: “Like a lot of Black people, though, I’ve learned that it’s often best just to ignore people like Elder. People who are — as my dad used to say — ‘skinfolk’ but not necessarily kinfolk.” If that was too subtle, she called me a “Trump fanboy,” “dangerous” and a “troll,” adding: “His candidacy feels personal. Like an insult to Blackness.” The reaction from non-conservative media outlets ... crickets. There is, please understand, but one way to be black — and that is left-wing.

In her column the following week, after many readers expressed their displeasure with her column, Smith wrote: “Casting what, for most Democrats, would be a protest vote against Newsom would put Elder in a position to become governor — and open the door to far-right thinking and white supremacist policies.” “White supremacist policies?”

The vitriol-in-politics-denouncing *Los Angeles Times* also hired as a columnist the equally charming Jean Guerrero, who, in an appearance on CNN, incredibly claimed: “(Elder has) refused to talk to non-partisan media outlets and to journalists who are critical of him, has refused to answer difficult questions.... But he has been able to reach the minority of voters in California who embrace his white



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supremacist worldview.”

Actually, Elder gave two contentious “interviews” with hostile editorial board members of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Sacramento Bee*, both of which newspapers supported Newsom’s election for governor and opposed his recall. One can watch the interviews on YouTube.

Guerrero, not an *L.A. Times* board member, attempted to participate in that paper’s interview, and I refused to allow her. Poor Guerrero, denied a well-deserved opportunity to ask a question after having accused me of holding “white supremacist” views. And it was Guerrero’s fellow columnist, Smith, who “refused to talk” by declining several invitations to appear on my radio show and defend her “white supremacist” slur.

During my campaign, not only did a woman in a gorilla mask throw an egg at me, but minutes earlier, as I stood on a city corner giving a press conference, someone in a car drove slowly and fired a pellet gun, striking two members of my security team. About the egg attack, a Los Angeles headline called it an “altercation,” accompanied with a photo — since removed — showing me embracing a campaign supporter. The photo, however, looked as if I were slapping the female supporter. A reader looking just at the headline and photo could easily assume the “altercation” was Elder *committing* an attack, as opposed to Elder having *been* attacked.

Finally, at the start of my interview with the *Times*, I asked whether they concurred with their columnist’s assertion that I’m “the black face of white supremacy.” They ducked, refusing to condemn the comment or the columnist.

There was certainly no denunciation by my interviewers of any “vitriol in politics,” a vitriol that now, claims the *Times* in its editorial, “is driving good people out of public service.”

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk show host. His latest book, The New Trump Standard, is available in paperback from Amazon.com and for Nook, Kindle, iBooks and Google Play. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an “Elderado,” visit www.LarryElder.com. Follow Larry on Twitter @LarryElder. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.

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