

Enrique Valadez

April 29, 2025

On March 5th, 2025, I, Mariaelena Sarmiento, was assisting in checking the bingo numbers alongside Mr. David Perez. I was double checking the bingo numbers while Mr. Perez, our volunteer treasurer, was calling out the bingo numbers. That day, there were two individuals that called out "bingo" one right after the other. Mr. Perez typically pulls the bingo balls and then shows the ball to the camera which, in turn, posts the bingo number on all four televisions.

This day, in question, the first bingo winner's numbers were correct and being verified just as the second bingo winner called out "bingo". Mr Perez was on the stage at this time and he claimed that he did not call out the number that the second bingo winner was claiming to have won, but the number was already being displayed on the televisions, which means that the number had already been shown to the congregation and also displayed for the camera by Mr. Perez. The official winner of the bingo game was the first winner and the spiraling of emotions came as a result of a complete misunderstanding with the second bingo winner.

I made mention to Mr. Perez that, "Once a number pops up on the screen it is already an "in-play" number", Mr. Perez got offended when I stated this to him. We continued to play the remaining games of bingo and at the end of the five bingo games, Mr. Perez openly threatened me by stating, "Don't EVER do that again", he remarked as he sat down at his seat.

Mr. Perez is not shy about putting his dirty laundry for people to see and after a couple of weeks, Mr. Perez openly stated, to me, while counting the money for a different event, "The least contact I have with you, the better for me".

The whole time I have been a member at the center, there has not been any run-ins of any sort with Mr. Perez or his wife, they have always been pleasant with me. It is unfortunate to be having to deal with this suspension when a BIG deal was made out of a small inconsistency caused by Mr. Perez's inability to call out a bingo number before showing the ball to the camera. These things, in question, could have been easily solved and put to rest with a friendly conversation instead of open threats and notices of suspension.

Mr. Perez is a volunteer, not a city employee, or official of any kind as the suspension letter openly claims. There was no intent to cause harm with any of the words used with Mr. Perez. The verbal abuse as stated in the suspension letter was said politely, and it was merely clearing up the misunderstanding for the bingo players, as is a responsibility of the President

This suspension is invalid and encroaching on my personal time and emotional well-being. I have been an active member of the Happiness Center for the last 8 years and have not had ANY issues of any kind with any of the members or the council.

Please consider this letter my statement for the accusation placed against me and kindly revoke the suspension for all other centers, as I will NOT be returning to the Happiness Center due to the disrespect and sheer difficulties that I have experienced as an elected volunteer President for the years 2024 - 2025.

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