
Public Comment on the comments on Melanie Bagby's Case # 2025-00594 at commission meeting.

From Laurie alderman [REDACTED]

Date Wed 3/18/2026 2:45 PM

To CommAsst <CommAsst@fppc.ca.gov>

Cc adinayflores [REDACTED] George Barich [REDACTED]
Michael Ceremello Ceremello [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (683 KB)

Investigators or 'stalkers'_ When Sonoma County citizen-activists push the boundaries on public access _ PD Plus (1).pdf;

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EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please add my public comment to #4 on tomorrow's agenda which is Melanie Bagby's case. The public commenters so far have once again inappropriately attacked complainant and whistleblower, Adina Flores, rather than deal with the facts in the situation.

Adina Flores, myself and other whistleblowers are all treated this way by many politicians and groups in Sonoma County with broad statements about our activism that are not accurate. There are so many whistleblowers and complainants from Sonoma County because there is so much local corruption. Adina Flores investigations and complaints have uncovered some major scandals in Sonoma County -- even the FBI has used her research. She has her opinions that are conservative, but that is her right to have in this democracy. She is not targeting people she

politically disagrees with, she is targeting those who have conflicts of interests or have done unethical acts.

Using Adina Flores connection to Bagby's case is inappropriate in the least. The facts speak for themselves that are in the stipulation. Sonoma County politicians and officials are known to try to silence whistleblowers by any means possible. I invite you to see what lengths the local politicians and local newspaper go to attack whistleblowers in our county (see attached article from 2 1/2 years ago). The local journalists and powers that be even went after me in this article for being part of a civil rights suit, not for the cost of the PRAs that I was doing in my job as a paralegal.

There are many legitimate complaints uncovered by Sonoma County residents and should not draw away the attention from Melanie Bagby's case itself.

Sincerely,

Laurie Alderman

Cotati, CA 94931

Linda Tripoli, lower left, attends and takes notes at most Graton Fire District board meetings. She contested returning candidate filing fees at the monthly meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)

Investigators or 'stalkers'? When Sonoma County citizen-activists push the boundaries on public access

PHIL BARBER AND ALANA MINKLER

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

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On Jan. 28, 2022, Adina Flores sent a request to the County of Sonoma under the California Public Records Act, asking to see all emails and text messages between Dr. Sundari Mase, then the county's health officer, and Dr. Celeste Philip, who was a deputy director for noninfectious diseases with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A week later, Flores sent two more PRA requests, as they are commonly known, to the county. Eight days later, she filed another.

It was the slow windup of a campaign that now looks like a protracted battle.

"It's not done for research. It's done to fit a conspiracy theory."

— *Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore*

Over the past 21 months, Flores has sent at least 75 PRA requests to Sonoma County, some of them long and multilayered. The County Counsel's Office estimated on Sept. 21 that staff had spent close to 2,500 hours fulfilling those requests, with a cost to taxpayers of more than \$300,000.

Flores continues to file requests for information, though she no longer lives in Sonoma County.

And the county is not her only target.

Flores has used public access laws to dig into the records of the State of California, Healdsburg and other local cities, and Santa Rosa City Schools — her employer until she opted to resign from her position in January 2023.

At the state level, Flores has filed at least 160 complaints to the California Fair Political Practices Commission, an agency that is legally obligated to review each accusation of improper action by an elected official or political candidate. The commission has rejected a large majority of those complaints. As of July, four had been referred to a local district attorney's office, the California Attorney General or the FBI.

Flores stands out because of her growing reputation, but she is not alone in using public access laws to take on local government.

This collage shows Linda Tripoli, upper left, Adina Flores, center, George Barich, upper right, Laurie Alderman, lower left, and Angela Cordova, lower right, in front of some of the public documents they have generated. All have argued that their work is crucial to government accountability, but some say their demands have put a strain on public access systems.

This collage shows Linda Tripoli, upper left, Adina Flores, center, George Barich, upper right, Laurie Alderman, lower left, and Angela Cordova, lower right, in front of some of the public documents they have generated. All have argued that their work is crucial to government accountability, but some say their demands have put a strain on public access systems.

In Santa Rosa, Eric Fraser has filed at least 142 PRA requests with the city.

In Cotati, longtime gadflies Laurie Alderman and George Barich have won a combined \$130,000 in settlement money over free speech lawsuits.

In Graton, the local fire district's board of trustees has hired outside counsel to attend meetings on a \$2,500-a-month retainer, allegedly to guard against the complaints of a single resident, Linda Tripoli.

In Cloverdale, mom Angela Cordova has filed a second civil suit against the local school district and won.

These residents invariably see their work as an important form of citizen advocacy — a way to hold powerful interests accountable to the public.

But access bears a cost. With many local governments facing ongoing shortages in staffing, the hours spent responding to the demands of a disgruntled populace can exact a toll on the people doing that work.

Applauding public transparency

The fundamental idea behind public access laws is that every individual has the right to know how elected officials are reaching decisions, which is critical to fostering an informed society and government accountability.

Catherine Crump, director of the Samuelson Law, Technology & Public Policy Clinic at UC Berkeley School of Law, spent a decade as a litigator for the American Civil Liberties Union and has filed many records requests under state and federal public records laws. As an employee at a public institution, her emails also are subject to the state Public Records Act.

“The government is supposed to act on behalf of the people, and for us to know what the government is doing in our name, we need access to a certain amount of information,” Crump said.

 Linda Tripoli attends and comments at most Graton Fire District board meetings. She argued against the board's policy on returning candidate filing fees at the monthly meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)

Linda Tripoli attends and comments at most Graton Fire District board meetings. She argued against the board's policy on returning candidate filing fees at the monthly meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)

Every state has its own version of a public records act. At the federal level, it's the Freedom of Information Act.

When Crump worked with the ACLU, they obtained 5,500 pages of internal records from 205 police departments across the country. Their discovery led to a New York Times article revealing that law enforcement agencies were routinely tracking cellphones with little or no court oversight.

"The mere thought that as a member of the public, getting access to source documents is something that carries potential cost — how can you see it as anything but a value to the public?"

— Santa Rosa resident Eric Fraser

In April 2022, a Press Democrat records request revealed California State University's \$600,000 settlement to a former Sonoma State provost who had reported employee complaints of alleged sexual harassment by then-President Judy Sakaki's husband, education lobbyist Patrick McCallum.

Much of the information gathered for this story came through PRA requests by The Press Democrat.

There are exemptions to PRA obligations, such as records pertaining to an ongoing police investigation. But government bodies must process every request, do a search for responsive records and analyze whether records must be disclosed by law. In general, anyone can file a request.

"My sense is that this is a tool that used to be used primarily by specialists, like journalists or members of advocacy groups, like the American Civil Liberties Union," Crump said.

Now, with the rise of the internet and a shift to digital records, Crump believes there's a broader array of people using the PRA.

"I think there is an increase in the extent to which requests that are burdensome or even abusive are being filed," she said. "I have gained a sense of how particularly broad requests can be really time consuming to respond to, and can detract from the ability of public officials to carry out the public's business."

Requests, intensity increasing

Linda Tripoli vs. Graton Fire District

The issues: Linda Tripoli's interest in the Graton Fire District began in the summer of 2020 with a modest question: Why were they flying the "thin blue line" flag outside the fire department on Gravenstein Highway?

She found the answers inadequate, and has been at odds with Graton Fire Chief Bill Bullard and a couple members of the district's board of trustees ever since.

According to Tripoli, a 67-year-old retired attorney, the district fell \$1.1 million short in one budget and neglected to discuss it at the next meeting; attempted to approve paying Bullard \$40,000 per year in a closed session; and promoted six employees without proper notice, among other violations.

The fallout: A Graton Fire District budget represented on the April 2023 agenda listed a total of \$125,000 spent to defend against Tripoli in court. (She sued the district for failing to comply with policy, but lost.) Close to \$120,000 had gone toward staff time and related costs for information requests, with Tripoli listed as one of the primary factors.

In a March 2022 agenda packet was an unsigned memo detailing the district's costs related to "a member of the community." Because of the requests and threats of litigation, the memo read, an outside legal counselor began attending meetings, to "respond and address any legal or procedural challenges."

"Ms. Tripoli, she's just there to say, 'Oh, you didn't dot the I or cross the t.' Or, 'You shouldn't have this item in this column,'" said Jack Christensen, a retired electronics executive who served on the Graton Fire District board 20 years ago. "So is there value added? I don't think so."

Tripoli pushed back against the idea that her complaints are trivial.

"I don't think \$40,000 for the chief is insignificant," she said. "Promoting six firefighters I don't think is nitpicky."

Eric Lawyer, a legislative advocate for the California State Association of Counties, agrees with Crump's assessment.

"It seems to be the case that the number of requests are increasing, and the intensity is increasing," Lawyer said. "It could be a response to things that are happening in the news."

Critical race theory, election misinformation, anti-vaccination rhetoric — all of them have flared across the internet and at local board meetings over the past few years. They seem symbolic of a cultural moment when mistrust and hostility toward government are peaking.

Lawyer, who called the Public Records Act "really vital to holding government accountable at all levels," offered some examples of people taking that power to extremes.

One small California county is currently reviewing and redacting 621,000 separate documents, Lawyer said, part of a massive PRA request. Fresno County received a request involving 24 employees whose experience went back 50 years; the haul included about 350,000 microfilm images, and even some movie-style reels. In a separate request, Fresno was asked for transcripts from all 911 calls in a five-year time frame.

"It turned up over 400,000 records," Lawyer said of that last one. "They were eventually able to narrow it down to, I think, 168,000. You can contemplate how many staff resources that took."

County workers fulfill those requests, he added, even when they know the requester might be hostile to them, and even in cases when staff has a strong suspicion the person is experiencing a mental health crisis.

In Sonoma County, several recent public events have been disrupted by antisemitic, racist and anti-queer comments from Zoom attendees, and a few incendiary remarks delivered in person at Board of Supervisors meetings. Several of those commenters cited the protections of the Ralph M. Brown Act, which is meant to guarantee the public's business is done in public, and their right participate in those legislative meetings.

PRA requests don't convey that same intensity. But they, too, can be used as either a precise tool or a blunt weapon.

Eric Fraser, the Santa Rosa resident who has filed so many of them, questioned the motivations behind this story. He said his efforts would be unnecessary if the city were more transparent, and if media outlets like The Press Democrat did a better job of exposing irregularities.

“The mere thought that as a member of the public, getting access to source documents is something that carries potential cost — how can you see it as anything but a value to the public?” Fraser said.

But California counties, cities and districts are having to locate these source documents with less financial support. Proposition 42, passed in 2014, ended the state’s obligation to reimburse local governments for costs incurred in adhering to those duties.

A current California ballot initiative, filed with the Attorney General’s Office by the nonprofit group Consumer Watchdog in August, would set a 30-day limit for filling the large majority of PRA requests, and a 90-day limit under extraordinary circumstances.

As vital as this system is, it clearly puts a strain on public-sector staff.

“The sheer volume of work, and how that can really consume resources, is real,” Lawyer said. “Government workers join the public sector wanting to do good and make things happen in their community. To increase the time spent addressing PRA requests can be a lot to handle.”

 (Alana Minkler/The Press Democrat)

(Alana Minkler/The Press Democrat)

Big Pharma, media and the Rockefellers

Through her social-media presence and many public-meeting appearances, Adina Flores has become a well-known name in Sonoma County.

Her investigative efforts were initially focused largely on COVID-19 vaccines. She has since widened her scope in an attempt to untangle what she has described as a vast web of corruption connecting political officials at every level of government, private companies, nonprofit organizations, pharmaceutical interests, the media and — in the spirit of any good conspiracy theory — financially powerful families such as the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds.

"I am not an activist but an investigative journalist; a sounding board who strives to elevate the voices of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who have come to me in need."

— Adina Flores in a social media post

A May 17, 2022, email to the Healdsburg City Council exemplifies Flores' expansive theories:

"I have now proven that not only was the pandemic orchestrated, it appears that the wildfires were most likely orchestrated as well, in order to push the United Nations' agenda pertaining to the necessity for climate protection. I have followed the money trail pertaining to the fires and I found it interesting that each of the fire rebuilding contracts were allocated to immediate or distant family members of the elected officials governing our County. This was also the case in the Paradise, Oregon and Southern California fires as well."

 Former Sonoma County resident Adina Flores speaks at a public meeting in this undated photo. (Courtesy of Adina Flores)

Former Sonoma County resident Adina Flores speaks at a public meeting in this undated photo. (Courtesy of Adina Flores)

Her public information requests are, at times, savvy and creative. She exposed a minor Brown Act violation by Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore on Aug. 1, in part by phoning a public library in Legion City, Texas, to confirm he hadn't posted proper public notice where he was attending a meeting over Zoom.

The Board of Supervisors wound up having to negate its votes on four items, and pass those items again at a September meeting.

To Flores and her supporters, it was a victory for the people. To Gore, it was a meaningless gotcha.

"It's fair to say thousands and thousands of hours have been spent responding to, by and large, baseless accusations, followed up by the weaponizing of PRA and Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) law," Gore told The Press Democrat. "It's not done for research. It's done to fit a conspiracy theory."

He's right about the hours devoted to Flores' requests. As of Aug. 7, the County Counsel's Office estimated staff across all departments had spent 2,487 hours of staff time retrieving information for her and her partner, Shelby Pryor (he also has gone by Shelby Dodson), at a cost to taxpayers of \$322,920 in wages.

Flores and Pryor have also filed 14 PRA requests with the city of Healdsburg, which estimated a public cost of \$5,300.

Flores responded to an interview request by asking for a list of questions in advance. She posted those questions on social media, then declined the request. She did supply a written statement that included a Malcolm X quote and a verse from Corinthians.

"The lovely people copied on this thread are the true heroes of the Sonoma County community," she wrote. "These are folks from all races and walks of life. As a biracial woman, I am blessed to be a bridge to all. I am not an activist but an investigative journalist; a sounding board who strives to elevate the voices of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who have come to me in need."

"(Flores) doesn't even live in this county. She's not a concerned citizen — she's a disrupter."

— Cloverdale Unified School District trustee Preston Addison

Flores cc'd, among other people, Fraser, Cordova, Alderman and Barich, illustrating an interesting piece of this picture. Though the gadflies profiled here began their work independently, in

varying cities and on differing issues, they have tended to find one another over time.

Alderman said her views vary strongly from Flores, but their passion for government accountability has brought them together and they've helped each other with research

"We do make mistakes," Alderman said. "I'm more mild mannered — I'm a Democrat. I'm not anti-vax, but I think they have the right to think whatever they want. What we all want is the truth to come out. That's the only way we're ever going to go forward, is if people know the truth."

War against the schools

Angela Cordova vs. Cloverdale Unified School District

The issues: Angela Cordova, who has two daughters enrolled in the Cloverdale Unified School District and three kids who have graduated, considers herself a concerned parent, not an activist.

She said her issues with the school district were triggered last year when former Superintendent Betha MacClain decided to investigate and ultimately terminate a popular principal, Mark Lucchetti, for not properly investigating and reporting teacher misconduct.

She alleges that when she and others began to speak out, the school district board abused funds in an attempt to silence her.

The fallout: In September, 2022, Cordova filed a small claims case against the district and MacClain alleging they violated her First Amendment rights by sending her a cease and desist letter that included an order to "cease emailing the superintendent for any reason."

Cordova lost the case and was not awarded her attorney fees, but said it was a victory because the judge noted that the district's actions were "disturbing," and decided to file a second civil suit.

On Wednesday in closed session, the school board agreed to settle with Cordova in a 4-1 vote.

In all, Cordova said public records revealed the district had spent \$393,000 in three years on attorneys fees, over \$40,000 of which was spent "trying to silence me."

Flores is both the hub of the wheel and the most prolific digger.

Another of her targets is the local school system. She has sent nine PRA requests to Santa Rosa City Schools, and 13 to the Sonoma County Office of Education.

Flores has sent at least six emails with her intent to sue Santa Rosa City Schools and The Press Democrat since May, though no lawsuits have been filed in the Sonoma County Superior Court system.

An email Flores sent to the Santa Rosa City Schools, County of Sonoma and SCOE had a link to a Google document that said, "This letter serves as a notice of my intent to file a lawsuit against you if I do not receive payment for \$100,000." But once Press Democrat reporters gained access to the document, it was quickly replaced by another letter addressed to her landlord in Vallejo.

According to the California Department of Industrial Relations, Flores filed an unlawful termination complaint against Santa Rosa City Schools on May 18. They could not release more details due to the ongoing investigation, but Flores has claimed in emails that she was fired in retaliation as a protected whistleblower.

As of late, Flores' war against Santa Rosa City Schools has mostly focused on trustees Alegria De La Cruz, Ed Sheffield and Stephanie Manieri.

"I feel like we've been dealing with this for a long time," said Manieri, the board's president. "I would just say that her early comments to us were very much around COVID policies. And since then, it's evolved to include conspiracies about board members, conflicts of interest and inappropriate relationships, which are all false."

"I do think we are at a period where we could use some creative responses for how to make this manageable for everyone."

— UC Berkeley School of Law professor Catherine Crump

Flores' PRA requests suggest she's looking into connections between the school districts, government and equity-focused nonprofits including Los Cien, Raizes Collective and the NAACP of Sonoma County.

For example, in April she addressed a PRA request to the Santa Rosa and Petaluma City Schools districts, the Sonoma County Office of Education, the county, the cities of Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. It asked for all text messages, emails, payments and contracts between the agencies and several nonprofits including the Sonoma NAACP and its president Kirstyne Lange; Hello Alice, the group cofounded by Elizabeth Gore, Supervisor James Gore's wife; Nuestra Comunidad and Los Cien from 2018 to present.

"I don't think it's coincidental that the people she attacks for the most part are women and people of color," Manieri said.

Flores also is a woman of color. Her mother was Asian.

Manieri added that she sees Flores' actions as part of a larger culture shift of people feeling empowered to personally go after officials in local government.



According to Cloverdale Unified School District trustee Preston Addison, Flores has also targeted their board after connecting with Angela Cordova, filing PRA requests and FPPC complaints against them.

“(Flores) doesn't even live in this county,” Addison said. “She's not a concerned citizen — she's a disrupter.”

Straying into harassment, intimidation

Laurie Alderman and George Barich vs. City of Cotati

The issues: Two longtime gadflies, former lawyer Laurie Alderman and former council member George Barich, see their work as crucial to bringing public attention to what they call the city's blatant

corruption.

Alderman said her interest began to pique eight or nine years ago, when issues with her neighbors were not addressed properly by the city. In taking up her complaints at public meetings, she connected with Barich, who had been recalled in a 2009 special election.

The two have requested information from the city related to the environmental impacts of city-fueled developments, police reports, neighborhood complaints and city communications with specific residents.

The fallout: Combined, Alderman and Barich have won \$130,000 in settlement money over free speech lawsuits.

The two have sent a total of 19 records requests to the city, some incredibly lengthy, unearthing thousands of pages of documents.

"Along with Laurie Alderman, I brought evidence of Brown Act violations by the City of Cotati to the (former) District Attorney (Jill) Ravitch and more severe violations of the law to the local office of the FBI," said Barich. "Both agencies failed to provide me any service whatsoever, and refused to investigate or enforce state and federal law."

The two started the Facebook page, Let's Talk Cotati, dedicated to sharing their civilian oversight efforts.

"People stopped believing what the city's putting out and believe what I put out, and others put out on the website," Alderman said.

Unlike the other people profiled in this story, Flores and Pryor have occasionally veered into verbal harassment, and some say even physical intimidation.

A half-dozen people told The Press Democrat of tense in-person interactions with the couple, especially Pryor, who is a large man. They have demeaned many other people on social media, occasionally pushing the boundaries of appropriate speech.

In the comments following one of Flores' Facebook posts, a follower asked of a female county employee, "Oh, is this pic a man?!"

"They're all gay (Masonic agenda)," Flores replied.

In May, Pryor directed a racial epithet at Ed Sheffield, a Santa Rosa City Schools trustee, at a public meeting. Both men are Black.

Most of the people on the receiving end of these conflicts were unwilling to speak on the record, fearing additional targeting. Supervisor Gore, who has wound up in their investigative crosshairs more often than any other public official, is an exception.

Flores has filed at least 15 FPPC complaints about Gore individually, and another 23 that included him with other people; 33 of the 38 were rejected. Three remain open, and two others were added to an existing case.

The FPPC, through a representative, declined to provide a cost estimate for those reviews.

In a single PRA request to the county, dated March 29, 2022, Flores asked for all text messages and email correspondence between Gore and 162 different people, 14 business or nonprofit entities (including The Press Democrat) and “any Sonoma County wineries.”

Flores and Pryor attempted to contact many of Elizabeth Gore’s employees and volunteers at Hello Alice, according to the supervisor’s wife. And they have ruthlessly criticized the Gores on Facebook and Instagram.

“Our family and friends — this is home for us, and I can’t make light of the impact on social media,” Elizabeth Gore said. “When you have people who love you and are loyal to you, and they see these horrible comments, it gets other people upset.”

The animosity hit a new level in April 2022, when Pryor allegedly threatened James Gore and his family during a Board of Supervisors meeting, using an amplified speaker from the parking lot outside the chambers. Among the things Pryor called out to Gore that day, the supervisor said, was, “Bring a gun if you want to. Oh, yeah. I know how to use guns better than you.”

Pryor also allegedly used a misogynist slur to refer to Elizabeth Gore, and challenged the couple’s son to join the fight. The Gores’ son was 7 at the time; Pryor later said he believed the son was an adult.

The county secured a long-term restraining order against Pryor in June 2022, prohibiting him from coming within 100 yards from anyone in the Gore family, their home, vehicles and schools for three years. Sonoma County spent \$20,500 on that legal pursuit, according to the County Counsel’s Office.

But the confrontation did not end there, the Gores say.

“They say they’re investigative journalists. They’re not. They’re stalkers.”

— Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore

James Gore was in the middle of running for reelection at the time. As part of his campaign, he agreed to debate his opponent, pastor Andy Springer, at a local elementary school. The event

was sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

The day of the debate, according to Elizabeth Gore, they got a call from a local law enforcement agency, saying they believed Flores and Pryor would attend the event, recommending the Gores not bring their kids and suggesting the couple enter through a secured back door. Elizabeth Gore attended, and wound up shaken by the experience.

"I look up and Shelby is exactly 300 feet away, and he looks at me and winks and blows me a kiss and waves," Elizabeth said. "I felt the blood rush in my neck. I've never felt that before."

Flores showed up, too, and according to Elizabeth Gore, stood at a doorway shouting into a loudspeaker. Police soon showed up. The Gores contend that older women in attendance were traumatized, unsure of what was happening.

"These folks are trying to legitimize themselves. They say they're investigative journalists," James Gore said. "They're not. They're stalkers. They're trying to make this about government dollars, but they're wasting government dollars. They're trying to say it's about accountability. It's really about terrorizing people."

'I feel discouraged'

Flores' social media posts have long garnered a lot of likes. But her prominence spiked in April, when she began contributing to a news website called the [California Globe](#). She now routinely describes herself as a journalist.

Flores has written more than two dozen stories for the Globe, repeating and expanding upon many of her local causes in stories with titles like "Was the Sonoma Equity Office Driving the COVID-19 Narrative?" and "Transgender Takeover: A Breeding Ground for Sexual Assault."

The California Globe is published by Sea of Reeds Media, whose founder is Ken Kurson.

Kurson is a former editor of the New York Observer — at one time it was owned by Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of former President Donald Trump — and a former speechwriter for Rudolph Giuliani. In February 2022, he pleaded guilty to eavesdropping and computer trespass; prosecutors said he used a software program called WebWatcher to hack into his former wife's computer and monitor her online activities.

Flores' local notoriety has garnered detractors, too. Recently, a website appeared that is devoted to revealing "The Facts About Adina Flores." It includes links to newspaper and radio stories, and

to a letter someone wrote to the FPPC.

But her articles have also gotten the attention of local stakeholders who come across her work without context.

Eric Fraser vs. City of Santa Rosa

The issues: Eric Fraser, who is semiretired from a career he said included work as a civil rights researcher, owns a property in Santa Rosa that hosts a short-term rental unit. That role led him to question where Santa Rosa's rental and transient occupancy tax assessments were going.

He wound up advocating for others in his Greater Cherry neighborhood, he said, unearthing records on their behalf, on issues ranging from public art to sidewalk repair. But Fraser's records requests mostly focus on short-term rentals.

"We're getting funding to launch a research center, to study what we consider Santa Rosa's war on short-term rentals," he said. "When people engage in sort of fact-less policymaking, what can you call it other than a war?"

The fallout: Between April 2019 and late August 2023, Fraser filed 142 Public Records Act requests with the City of Santa Rosa.

On a single day — March 7, 2022 — he sent 48 separate PRA requests to the city, asking for a battery of information relating to Neighbor Notifications for 48 different addresses in Santa Rosa.

Some of his requests have been fairly sweeping.

On Aug. 8, 2021, for example, Fraser asked to receive all contracts, receipts, emails and letters regarding the city's relationship with the nonprofit Generation Housing, and similar documents pertaining to the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber and short-term rentals. The city wound up sending him 2,776 separate documents.

Another request, this one filed July 10, 2019, and relating to the Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area Board and the Heirloom Expo, turned up 479 documents.

Fraser denies the stakes are personal.

"I disagree completely with the idea that there's some sort of disagreement, running feud, anything like that," he said.

Madonna Feather, a Santa Rosa-based Indigenous advocate and board president of the nonprofit Raizes Collective, said when she came across one of Flores' articles accusing the nonprofit's director and trustee Alegria De La Cruz of having "weaved a web of deception for financial gain," she considered resigning from the board.

"When I first saw it, I was scared," Feather said. "It looks really messy — it looks like nepotism. There's a lot of money that came to Raizes (their total income increased \$340k in one year, according to Flores) that I'm seeing in this paper."

Feather said the impact of the article, which included screenshots of public records, still has her questioning the legitimacy of the nonprofit whose board she sits on.

In a recent Instagram post, Flores said she is "taking much-needed time for myself" and is not currently writing for the Globe.

She has also posted that she's now a social media contributor for American Values 2024, an organization that supports Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s run for president. Kennedy, an environmental lawyer and writer, has been a leader in promoting anti-vaccine misinformation and public health-related conspiracy theories.

If Flores' example is an extreme, it's clear that public agencies are having trouble keeping up with the hunger for information.

And some are wondering if there are ways to ensure public access demands are reasonable.

"I have to say, I feel discouraged at this moment," said Crump, the Berkeley professor. "It can work. But oftentimes, government agencies are also now overwhelmed by the number of requests they've gotten. That can mean that even legitimate requests, however you want to define that — it takes a long time to get any answers."

Crump added, "I do think we are at a period where we could use some creative responses for how to make this manageable for everyone."

Editor's note: This article has been updated to reflect Adina Flores' employment history. Flores elected to resign from her position at Santa Rosa City Schools in January 2023. It also was edited to add recent developments from an Oct. 18 meeting of the Cloverdale Unified School District board.

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