

MOTION

On September 22, 2020, at approximately 10:01 p.m., 21-year old Juan Carlos Hernández finished his shift at an illegal and unlicensed cannabis dispensary named VIP Collective – LA located at 8113 S. Western Avenue. Mr. Hernández' car was found just over 28 hours later and abandoned a few miles from where he worked. To date, the detectives investigating this missing person's case have not been able to locate Mr. Hernández, and believe that a monetary reward may compel members of the public to provide information on Mr. Hernández' whereabouts.

California Government Code Section 53069.5 limits the ability of a city to use public funds in cases involving missing persons. In lieu of public funds, the City of Los Angeles may accept private donations and hold them in escrow as a reward to be paid to the appropriate parties if information relevant to locating the whereabouts of Juan Carlos Hernández is provided and actionable. In this situation the City of Los Angeles is very proud that the legal cannabis industry has come forward with the goal of raising \$50,000 toward a reward fund to find Mr. Hernández and other donations will be solicited.

Furthermore, the City of Los Angeles has a responsibility to the public to close and dismantle every illegal cannabis operation in the City of Los Angeles, including the VIP Collective – LA. Illegal cannabis operations not only are unlicensed and unaccountable to the public, these unscrupulous operators sell untested, tainted, and fraudulently packaged products that are harmful to the cannabis consuming public and have been shown to be debilitating and kill people. These operations are not only dangerous to customers, they are often dangerous to employees who typically do not know they are working at an illegal business where cash is very accessible. The entire point of Proposition 64, as well as Proposition M and the cannabis regulations effective in the City of Los Angeles was to create a licensed system that would put an end to both of these public health and public safety problems.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Council determine, as provided in Section 54954.2(b)(2) of the Government Code, and pursuant to Rule 23 of the Rules of the City Council, that pursuant to state law there is a need to take immediate action on this matter AND that the need for action came to the attention of the City subsequent to the posting of the agenda for today's Council meeting.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Council accept donations for the sole purpose of providing a reward for information leading to the whereabouts of Juan Carlos Hernández and advertising such reward. If a crime is found to have been committed, this reward would then be made available to provide an offer of reward for information leading to the identification, apprehension, and conviction of the person responsible for such crime against Mr. Hernández.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Clerk be instructed to accept private monetary donations for the above purpose, and to deposit all such other donations into a new Account in the Council District 10 Public Benefits Trust Fund No. 50R-14 entitled "Juan Carlos Hernández Reward", with the understanding that these funds may not be used for any other purpose, the funds will be returned to the donors within three years if unspent unless the reward is reauthorized by the City Council, and that any donation which exceeds the sum of \$5,000 in value, shall be submitted to the City Council for acceptance.

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WE FURTHER MOVE that the Police Department with the assistance of the Chief Legislative analyst and the City Attorney, be instructed to develop criteria for payment of this reward if actionable information as described above with respect to Mr. Hernández. Any payment of reward will require the approval of the Police Department, the City Attorney, and the Chief Legislative Analyst.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Clerk be directed to publish a reward notice, if the account receives more than \$50,000, in the "Our Weekly," "La Opinión," "Los Angeles Sentinel" and "LA Watts Times," in addition to the regular publications used by the City Clerk for reward notices, to ensure adequate community notice.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City of Los Angeles Cannabis Enforcement Task Force be directed to immediately take the steps necessary to permanently close the VIP Collective – LA located at 8113 S. Western Avenue.

PRESENTED BY:


HERB J. WESSON, JR.
Councilmember, 10th District


CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District

MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON (verbal)
Councilmember, 8th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL