

07/07/09

10A.

Good Evening. My name is Mary Emerson and I am a twenty year resident of Santa Clara.

A funny thing happened to California State Senate Bill SB43 on its way through the legislative pipeline.

What started life in January as an effort to improve cultural awareness in the healthcare community suddenly became a State mandate to suspend portions of the City of Santa Clara's Charter, removing the need to take competitive bids to

"construct, operate, or maintain a stadium for use by a professional football team."

On June 30th, on the eve of a major holiday weekend, SB43 was completely rewritten and repurposed to allow the San Francisco 49ers to make an end run around Santa Clara's City Charter.

98% of the text was removed.

In fact, the new version of SB43 keeps just 61 words of its original text. The newly minted 671 word document states that the State finds it is in Santa Clara's best interests to bypass the competitive bidding process for a football stadium.

I am not an expert on healthcare, and have no comments on the original intent of SB43. However, I am a long-time Santa Clara resident and voter. I am a firm believer that the residents of our City should be given an opportunity and encouraged to participate in the decisions that impact us all.

Our City Charter may not be perfect, but there is a process in place to make changes to it. In fact, that very process was discussed in these very chambers two weeks ago, on June 23rd.

Why did the State suddenly feel the need to interfere with our municipal processes?

The City needs to manage City affairs. We have a well-developed process by which contracts are awarded. The people of Santa Clara have a right to be involved in any decisions to bypass that process.

As elected representatives of the people of Santa Clara, you have a duty to let Sacramento know that we do not want them to tell us how to manage our fiscal affairs.

With all due respect to our State Legislators, they have some pretty significant issues to address at the State level. Their interest in subverting our City's well-established processes for awarding contracts is neither appropriate nor appreciated.

Thank you for your attention.