# Los Angeles City Leaders Remove Anti-Gay Signs in Silver Lake



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On June 12, 2024, Los Angeles City Councilmembers Nithya Raman and Hugo Soto-Martinez presided over the removal of anti-gay traffic signs in Silver Lake. These signs, which read "No cruising. No U-turns. Midnight to 6 am," were first installed in 1997 with the intent of deterring gay men from cruising in the area. The event, held at the AT Center, celebrated the dismantling of these signs and attracted many local LGBTQ community members.

Councilmember Raman acknowledged the city's historical struggle with homophobia, often enshrined in public spaces. These signs remained long after the area became known for its LGBTQ-friendly environment, including a hub of popular bars and clubs. Similar signs in West Hollywood were installed in 1991 but removed much earlier.

The removal ceremony featured Pickle, West Hollywood's inaugural drag queen laureate, who performed and criticized the signs as "insidious" discrimination. Despite the first removal actions occurring in 2011 after a local council vote, remaining signs were left almost forgotten until concerns were raised about their historical context by resident Donovan Daughtry.

Silver Lake has long stood as a sanctuary for the LGBTQ community. Notably, The Black Cat, a local bar, was the site of major LGBTQ rights protests in 1967. Neighborhood Council representative Maebe A. Girl, the first openly elected drag queen in U.S. public office, highlighted how the area has historically been a "safe haven" against stereotypes and police profiling.

Local bar co-owner Albert LeBarron and other community figures recounted past police actions targeting patrons, emphasizing coexisting challenges such as gentrification and discriminatory legislation. Both Councilmembers and LGBTQ community activists expressed that the sign removal was a significant, though symbolic, step towards broader protections for queer spaces.