

Statement by Julián Villarreal
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To understand the negative public opinion about CPS and Paula Gold Williams, consider CPS' recent campaign of propaganda disguised as a series of townhall meetings which consist of an hour's worth of CPS executives praising themselves and their CEO for the great job they do. As has long been the case with CPS, there is no opportunity for meaningful public dialog. The purpose of propaganda is always to make the public believe something that directly contradicts their lived experience. We are told to believe that CPS keeps our bills affordable, our energy reliable, and that it does so in financially and environmentally sustainable ways. But the truth is quite different. The wave of recent resignations also shows us that the rot truly runs deep throughout CPS and the problems began at the top. No amount of propaganda can hide the reality that CPS mismanagement and lack of preparedness led to billions in financial losses and untold human suffering during winter storm uri. It is impossible to hide the fact that the covid 19 pandemic pushed many struggling families over the edge, with high CPS bills and forced disconnections (that predated the crisis) at the forefront of the economic hardship. CPS under Paula Gold Williams doubled down on its climate denialism--investing vast sums of public money to further our dependence on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas that make people and the planet sick all the while painting clean renewable energy as out-of-reach, expensive, and unreliable.

Recent revelations of mismanagement and ethical failings at CPS are only shocking to those who have not been paying attention or to the willfully ignorant like Mayor Ron Nirenberg who effusively lavished praise on Gold -Williams for her leadership fo CPS.at a city council meeting barely a month before the disastrous winter storm.

The sad fact is that the suffering will only get worse unless the mayor and city council exercise their moral leadership and effect reforms that go to the roots of both CPS and SAWS, which long ago lost their moral compass (if indeed they ever had one) and have failed to act ethically in the public interest. If history is our guide, we cannot put much faith in the city council that for too long has been asleep at the wheel and who members are either too complacent to act on injustice or are simply too cozy with those who profit from continuing inequalities. CPS ratepayers and the public of San Antonio as a whole must take it upon ourselves to effect change through collective action.