We served with Angela Gonzales-Torres. She’s not ready for Congress.

We are current members of the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council who worked alongside Angela Gonzales-Torres. We saw how she handled responsibility, differences of opinion and the concerns of our neighbors. We write as individuals, not on behalf of the Board.

We came to the same conclusion: she is not ready for the office she is asking voters to entrust to her.

As unpaid volunteers, we give our evenings and weekends to serve our neighborhood. The work of the Neighborhood Council depends on people showing up, respecting one another and collaborating to make decisions. The president has a particular responsibility to facilitate that, which Gonzales-Torres fell short of.

The June 6, 2024 Board meeting brought our concerns about her leadership to a head. Gonzales-Torres had been president for about 10 months. With Gonzales-Torres presiding, debate over a Gaza ceasefire letter that she supported was allowed to dominate the evening. Many important agenda items went unheard, including earthquake preparedness and community input on the beloved Highland Theater’s future, another issue she had championed. Although the Board passed a budget, the paperwork the City requires to release our funds was not addressed at that meeting.

Not only that, she never got the ceasefire letter to a vote.

Two Board members resigned the following day. Many of us questioned whether continuing to serve was worth it. Working on the Board had become demoralizing. We wanted to help improve our neighborhood, but getting anything done had become an exhausting struggle.

Fifteen days after that meeting, Gonzales-Torres apologized and said she took full ownership of her decisions. She arranged for a City employee to chair the next two meetings.

But taking ownership requires work. And work requires showing up.

In the year after her presidency ended, she was absent from 7 of 14 Board meetings and arrived more than two hours late to two meetings. Our neighbors' needs had not disappeared. Neither had the responsibility she had accepted.

For those of us who stayed, none of this was abstract. These were our neighbors, our sidewalks, our evenings, our unpaid hours. We had relationships to repair and a council to rebuild. The title of president may have changed hands. The work still needed doing.

Gonzales-Torres points to her neighborhood council presidency as evidence that she is ready for Congress. We served alongside her. We ask voters to look beyond the title and examine how she actually did the job.

If you share her priorities, ask what delivering them in Congress will require: turning priorities into results, working through disagreement and staying with the job when things don't go your way.

We needed that leadership in Highland Park. We did not get it from Gonzales-Torres. We see no reason to think her performance in Congress would be different.

Jens Jonason
At-Large Director, 2023–2025

Lea Klein
At-Large Director, 2024–2025; Secretary, 2024–2025

Darren Gold
First Vice President, 2023–2024; President, 2024–2025

Caroline Aguirre
Public Safety Director, 2023–2025

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council roles during the 2023–2025 Board term