

Learn more at
westcovinaneighbors.com

“Capelle reported to [former City Manager Paulina Morales] that Wu had instructed him to approve plans for the business, even if they were not in full compliance with applicable codes. Capelle told Morales that he was unwilling to commit such fraud.”

Complaint, **Vincent A. Capelle v. City of West Covina**, 26STCV06790
(Los Angeles Superior Court. 3/2/2026)

Legal Expenditure Update: Capelle v. City of West Covina

Over the course of several years, former Fire Chief Vincent Capelle reported unlawful conduct to his superiors—two city managers—and Human Resources. In 2024, former City Manager Paulina Morales, issued Capelle a notice indicating his employment would be terminated. Capelle requested documents related to his termination. The City refused to provide any relevant documents. Capelle filed a lawsuit alleging he was wrongfully terminated under:

1. Whistleblower Retaliation (Labor Code § 1102.5)
2. FEHA (California Fair Employment and Housing Act) Retaliation (Government Code § 12849 et seq.)
3. Failure to Prevent Retaliation under FEHA (Government Code § 12940 et seq.)

Capelle seeks judgement against the city of West Covina on all causes of action.

A Déjà Vu Lawsuit: This lawsuit is one of several wrongful terminations filed against the City that describes unlawful conduct by Councilman Tony Wu. The City has either lost or settled those lawsuits. There is cause for concern.

Who Pays the Legal Expenses?

The short answer is we—the taxpaying residents of the city of West Covina—pay. See [Legal Expenditure Update: Whithorn vs. City of West Covina](#).

Learn about this case.

Complaint, Los Angeles Superior Court Case 26STCV06790

[West Covina Fire Chief Vincent Capelle terminated pending appeal hearing.](#) (November 11, 2024).
San Gabriel Valley Tribune.

WHAT IS A WHISTLEBLOWER?

On the simplest level, a whistleblower is someone who reports waste, fraud, abuse, corruption, or dangers to public health and safety to someone who is in the position to rectify the wrongdoing. A whistleblower typically works inside of the organization where the wrongdoing is taking place; however, being an agency or company “insider” is not essential to serving as a whistleblower. What matters is that the individual discloses information about wrongdoing that otherwise would not be known.

National Whistleblower Center

WHAT IS WRONGFUL TERMINATION?

Wrongful termination is when an employer fires an employee for an illegal reason. Termination could be wrongful if an employer fires an employee:

- Due to discrimination
- In violation of a federal or state labor law
- Because an employee reported and refused to participate in harassment
- Because an employee reported and refused to conduct an illegal act or safety violation.

Termination can also be considered wrongful if an employer fires an employee but did not follow their termination policies.

<https://www.usa.gov/wrongful-termination>