



**MARIA HILDA** and Guillermo Gonzalez, a Salvadoran couple from Granada Hills, walk in Vatican City on Thursday. While in college, the couple befriended Archbishop Oscar Romero, who will be canonized Sunday.

**DECISION CALIFORNIA**  
The pivotal battles for control of the House

## Republican PAC bypasses Rohrabacher and Walters

**45TH DISTRICT**  
**48TH DISTRICT**

Decision on TV ad buys may signal the O.C. Republicans are vulnerable in difficult reelection campaigns.

By **MICHAEL FINNEGAN** AND **MARK Z. BARABAK**

In a worrisome sign for two endangered Orange County lawmakers, a major Republican Party funding group has passed over the pair in its opening round of broadcast television advertising across Southern California.

The omission of Reps. Dana Rohrabacher and Mimi Walters by the Congressional Leadership Fund, a political action committee closely aligned with House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.), comes at a crucial inflection point in the midterm election when the two parties begin assessing their likely winners and losers.

The decisions are particularly acute for the GOP, which is facing a tsunami of Democratic campaign cash ahead of a feared blue wave on Nov. 6.

"Republicans are taking a coldblooded look at races to decide where to put resources and where to withdraw resources to put somewhere else," said Stuart Rothenberg, a nonpartisan election analyst who has spent decades sizing up campaigns.

The GOP has already cut loose several incumbents, including Reps. Mike Coffman in the Denver suburbs and Mike Bishop in southern Michigan.

Democrats need a gain of 23 seats nationwide to take control of the House, which they surrendered after a blowout loss in the 2010 midterm election.

Candidates in California, where more than half a dozen seats are being seriously contested, are at particular risk of being cut off financially because of the state's exorbitant advertising costs. Money saved in the costly Los Angeles media [See **GOP spending**, A7]

**2018 MIDTERM ELECTION**

## GOP's lock on states' power at risk

Several governor's races, even in reddest states, are anyone's game in a year crucial for 2020 redistricting.

By **EVAN HALPER**

**DETROIT** — Running in a place where Republicans dominate state government and Donald Trump won in 2016, Michigan Atty. Gen. Bill Schuette might have expected an easier path to victory in the upcoming governor's race.

But at a recent midday news conference on the fringes of downtown Detroit, his allies were outnumbered by protesters outside, who shouted that the GOP nominee should "Go home!" banged on building windows and hoisted a giant puppet of him scowling. Schuette is trailing badly in polls.

In similar governor's races throughout the nation, the GOP's lock on power is in serious jeopardy as their candidates — in even the reddest states where Democrats have long been an afterthought — struggle ahead of the November midterm.

Some of the states where Republicans risk losing the governor's office — Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida and Ohio, for example — are known to swing politically, but the trend extends far beyond those states.

Georgia, Iowa, Kansas and South Dakota have all been thrown into the toss-up column by the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, which recently noted that even Oklahoma is not a lock for Republicans.

The timing is bad for the Republicans, emerging as [See **Governors**, A7]

### Campaigns focus on voting rights

In Georgia and beyond, restrictions are assailed as Republican attempts to suppress legitimate votes. **NATION, A10**

# Sainthood, at long last

## They spent years quietly guarding a slain archbishop's legacy amid El Salvador's war. Now, their wait is over.

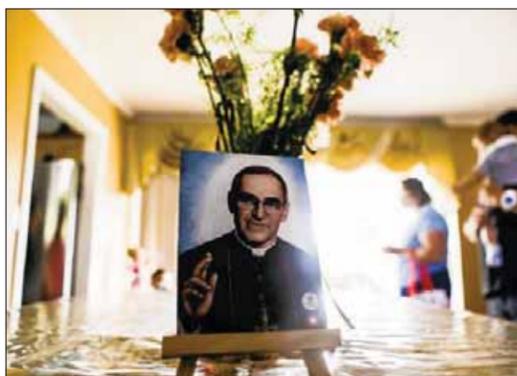
By **ESMERALDA BERMUDEZ**

**ROME** — After he was killed, they burned his photographs and nearly every memento they had of their friend. The rest they buried in their garden, just beneath their guava tree.

Maria Hilda and Guillermo Gonzalez feared saying his name, even to their closest relatives.

It was 1980, and a brutal war grabbed hold of El Salvador soon after Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot in the heart as he led Mass in a hospital chapel.

To them and thousands



**MARIA ALEJANDRA CARDONA** Los Angeles Times  
**ARCHBISHOP** Romero was assassinated as he led Mass in 1980, at the outset of El Salvador's civil war. He had spoken out against military repression.

of other Salvadorans who fled the violence in their homeland and came to Los Angeles, Romero was a hero who fought against oppression, against the massacre of the poor.

To others, he was an agitator. They called him a leftist, guerrilla, communist.

Long after he died, Romero's legacy remained so polarizing that the Roman Catholic Church took decades to decide whether he deserved to be a saint.

Now 68 and 71 years old, Maria Hilda and Guillermo of Granada Hills thought they would never live to see this day — traveling to Rome [See **Romero**, A4]

## In #MeToo era, a banishment leaves a campus divided

UCI case highlights conflicting views on what constitutes sexual harassment and appropriate discipline.

By **TERESA WATANABE**

For years, the professor told the assistant dean that she was beautiful and greeted her with hugs and a kiss on each cheek.

During their time together at UC Irvine, Francisco J. Ayala, 84, and Benedicte Shipley, 50, perceived their encounters in dramatically different ways.

He said he believed he was showing her admiration, respect and the courtly manners of his native Spain. She said she felt objectified and humiliated. Her version won out this year, when officials concluded that Ayala had sexually harassed Shipley and two other women.

The university swiftly

moved to erase his presence. The world-renowned geneticist resigned, was banned from campus and stripped of prestigious University of California titles. And though he had given Irvine \$11.5 million in donations, his name was taken off the university buildings he helped support.

The sanctions have bitterly divided the campus, drawn international attention and underscored the growing complexity of the nation's pitched battles over sexual harassment.

As the #MeToo movement empowers more women to share their stories and hold powerful institutions accountable, the UC Irvine case highlights conflicting views about how to define sexual harassment — and whether all offensive acts deserve equal punishment.

That debate is likely to deepen if, as expected, the Trump administration changes federal sexual harassment standards for campuses. Under Title IX stand- [See **Professor**, A8]



**MYUNG J. CHUN** Los Angeles Times  
**HUNDREDS OF** students were bused to a rally at Will Rogers Memorial Park to protest Metro's plan to route the Purple Line extension under Beverly Hills High.

## Beverly Hills students speak out against subway

High schoolers call on Trump to pull funding for Westside route in protest of plans to tunnel under campus.

By **LAURA J. NELSON**

The bitter, years-long battle between Beverly Hills and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority over the route of the Westside subway has found a fresh new face.

On Friday morning, hundreds of students as young as 8 left their Beverly Hills classrooms and rallied at a public park, protesting Metro's plans to tunnel beneath

Beverly Hills High School.

Speaking before a crowd of more than 1,500 people, high school students called on President Trump, who owns a home next to the park, to move the Purple Line subway away from the campus or revoke its \$15-billion package of federal grants and low-interest loans.

Teenagers who have grown up watching the Beverly Hills Unified School District's fight against Metro said they feared that tunneling beneath the campus could spark an explosion because the soil is studded with abandoned oil wells and pockets of methane gas.

"I should not constantly be terrified of an explosion ...

or that my health could be jeopardized, simply by being at school," said student organizer Amanda Khodabash, a 16-year-old senior, at the rally.

Friday's rally was billed as a "walkout," though students were required to submit permission slips and were bused to the park. High school organizers had help from district staff members who invited the younger students, lined up school buses and kept track of hundreds of permission slips, district officials said.

Some younger students sprawled on the grass in the park drinking juice boxes, clutching their brown-bag lunches and scrawling messages on posters. An 8-year- [See **Protest**, A8]

**NL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES**

**Playoff coverage**  
An in-depth look at Game 1 between the Dodgers and the Brewers. **SPORTS, D1**

Printed with soy inks on partially recycled paper.

**Stocks rebound after a week of steep losses**

The market declined for six straight sessions before Friday's comeback, signaling that volatility could be the new normal on Wall Street. **BUSINESS, C1**

**Weather**  
Early rain possible. L.A. Basin: 73/62. **B6**

# Divergent views of encounters

**[Professor, from A1]** ards followed by UC, one marker of sexual harassment is unwanted conduct “sufficiently severe or pervasive” to unreasonably interfere with a person’s education or employment. The administration is considering moving to a definition used by the U.S. Supreme Court that states the conduct also must be “objectively offensive.”

Unwanted fondling or forcible kissing clearly crosses that line — but people sharply disagree about Ayala’s conduct, which included a 2015 incident in which he jokingly offered one of the women his lap as a seat at a faculty meeting (and then apologized after he learned she was offended).

Elizabeth Loftus, a UCI professor of social ecology, law and cognitive science, said she found Ayala’s hugs and cheek kisses “adorable.” Shipley, who said Ayala also on occasion rubbed his hands up and down her sides when hugging, viewed his behavior as “more than creepy.”

Of the 10 women besides the complainants who said Ayala gave them compliments or greeted him with kisses, two said it made them feel uncomfortable, according to UCI’s findings. The Times obtained an unredacted copy of the report. Others who witnessed Ayala’s actions called them inappropriate. One called him a “dirty old man.”

Rose McDermott, a Brown University professor who specializes in gender issues, believes younger women are more sensitive to perceived harassment than older ones.

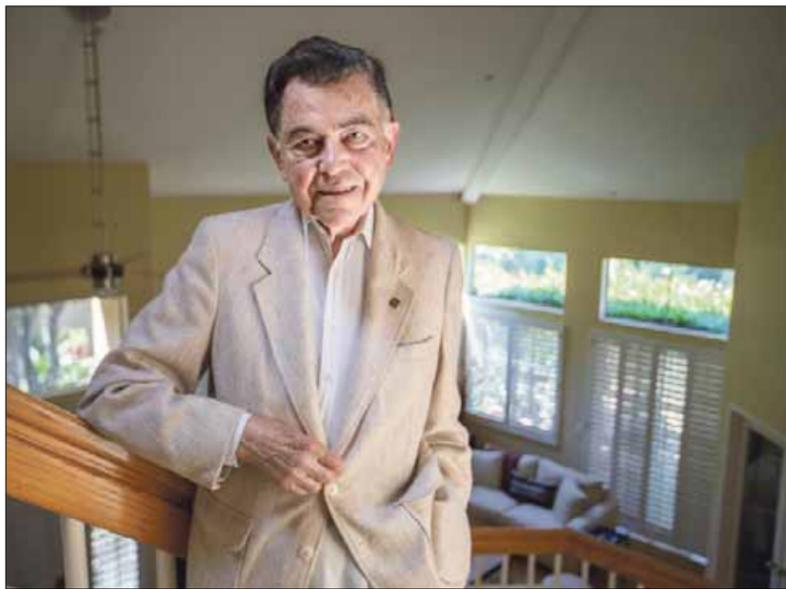
“How we draw the line between inappropriate or patronizing behavior and genuine harassment is really challenging because women themselves don’t agree,” she said. “Those in-between spaces are getting harder to negotiate.”

More than 100 scholars at UCI and around the world have signed a statement expressing concern that the sanctions were “a massive overreaction.”

Kristen Monroe, a political science professor who signed the letter, described herself as a feminist whose “natural proclivity is to be sympathetic to women.” But she called the severity of the university sanctions against Ayala “excessive” and said close supervision and training might have been enough.



**BENEDICTE SHIPLEY**, assistant dean of UC Irvine’s School of Biological Sciences, said she viewed professor Francisco J. Ayala’s behavior as “more than creepy.”



**AFTER** the allegations by Shipley and others, Ayala, a world-renowned geneticist and former priest, was banned from campus and stripped of prestigious UC titles.

A UCI spokeswoman said Ayala received multiple training sessions, both online and in person. He says they didn’t address his routine greetings and compliments.

“The #MeToo movement has gone too far,” Monroe said.

On the other hand, 38 tenured professors who were Ayala’s colleagues at the School of Biological Sciences have written an article supporting the women who took on the influential schol-

ar despite potential risks to their careers. They said that excusing his unwelcome behavior as Old World manners was offensive, and that Ayala knew the rules but chose to break them.

“A powerful man sexualized junior colleagues in the workplace in a way that eroded rather than improved their self-confidence and morale,” they wrote. “Prolonged exposure to this kind of harassment can be as damaging to careers and mental health as demands for sexual favors in return for

advancement.”

Last fall, UCI launched what turned into a six-month investigation after Shipley, assistant dean of the School of Biological Sciences, filed a complaint of sexual harassment, as did three members of the UCI Ecology & Evolutionary Biology department: Michelle Herrera, a graduate student; Kathleen Treseder, a professor and department chairwoman; and Jessica Pratt, an assistant teaching professor.

All four asked UCI to re-

lease their names.

The investigation concluded that Ayala had sexually harassed Treseder, Pratt and Shipley. Investigators sided with the women on some claims that Ayala denies and that they could not corroborate — including Treseder’s allegation that he told her he wanted to “grab [her] ass” and that he talked about her having an orgasm.

Investigators noted that Treseder was so unnerved by Ayala that she stopped assigning him female teaching assistants and asked a male colleague to attend events with her.

UC Irvine Chancellor Howard Gillman accepted the investigation findings, praised the women’s courage in stepping forward and justified the sanctions by noting the multiple substantiated allegations and the “power differentials at play.” UC President Janet Napolitano approved Gillman’s actions.

During a recent interview at a friend’s home, Ayala — a former Dominican priest whose family vineyard made him a millionaire — said he is continuing his academic research and does not plan to sue UCI, his academic home for three decades, or demand the return of his donations.

Still, he said he felt “dreadful,” and that the university had “done me as much damage as possible.”

He said he was troubled that, among the women who complained, only Pratt told him his behavior bothered her. If others had, he said, he would have stopped immediately.

“Unfortunately, these things I see as courtesies are interpreted by three or four women as sexual harassment,” he said. “Most people who know me will acknowledge my manners are very gentlemanly, very proper and I treat women and men with utmost respect.”

Shipley, who spoke to The Times in a campus conference room, acknowledged that she had not told Ayala how she felt but said she feared doing so would jeopardize her career. Over 28 years at UCI, she said, she worked her way up from an administrative assistant.

“You’re afraid of what’s going to happen to you,” Shipley said. “You’re afraid for your future promotion.”

Even though her claims were vindicated, she said that speaking out “cost me dearly” in backlash from col-

leagues.

Ayala’s greater status is evident in photos of his office taken before he was expelled from campus: the framed images of him posing with U.S. presidents and the queen of Spain, the international awards, the more than two dozen honorary degrees.

Shipley’s office is stark. She explained she removed all personal photos and items because she felt threatened after some faculty members confronted her.

In a letter to faculty last month, UCI Provost Enrique Laverna said the administration welcomed “ongoing conversation” about the case but not “insensitive or confrontational actions” against the women who came forward.

Fear of retaliation in the male-dominated world of science is a genuine barrier to reporting sexual harassment, according to a recent report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. A 2003 national study cited in the report found that 58% of those surveyed in academia had experienced sexual harassment.

Fatima Goss Graves, president of the National Women’s Law Center, said academic institutions too often fail to mete out meaningful consequences to sexual harassers.

“I’m not deeply worried that institutions are going overboard in strong accountability for harassment,” she said. “I do not think we are anywhere near that.”

But Candace Hetzner, Boston College’s associate dean for academic affairs, who has spoken out about academic sexual harassment, said she worries that cases like Ayala’s could jeopardize the progress that has been made.

“I am hearing from lots and lots of feminists who say it’s all gotten too complicated and heavy-handed,” Hetzner said. “We’ve lost perspective on what truly matters. Rape and forced sex is heinous. Saying ‘why don’t you sit on my lap?’ is not. To the extent you don’t make distinctions ... you risk getting a backlash that destroys much of what many of us have fought for for many, many years.”

teresa.watanabe

@latimes.com

Twitter:

@TeresaWatanabe

# Beverly Hills students protest Metro plan

**[Protest, from A1]** old’s homemade sign, decorated in red, blue and yellow crayon, urged Metro to “dig some were elce!”

Organizers planned lessons during the rally, including one about civil rights leader Rosa Parks that emphasized the importance of peaceful, nonviolent protests.

The \$9-billion Purple Line project will extend Metro’s subway to West Los Angeles from its current terminus in Koreatown, creating a half-hour trip to downtown. An alternative to the Westside’s traffic-choked streets will be key to the success of the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Metro’s route to the Westside includes a station near Constellation Boulevard in Century City, two blocks west of the high school. Officials had considered a Santa Monica Boulevard route that would have avoided the campus but discarded it after geologists found a complex earthquake fault zone nearby.

For years, officials with the school district and the city have fought Metro in court over that decision, seeking to stop, delay or reroute the subway.

More than five years of environmental analysis have shown that the subway can be built without risking students’ health, Metro spokesman Dave Sotero said. Metro officials “appreciate and respect the passion and civic engagement of the high school students,” he added.

The subway is being built in three phases: along Wilshire Boulevard through the Miracle Mile by 2023; to Beverly Hills and Century City by 2025; and to Westwood and West L.A. by 2026.



**RYAN ABRISHAMI**, a Beverly Hills senior, high-fives younger students at the rally. School district officials and the city have fought Metro’s Purple Line project in court, seeking to stop, delay or reroute the subway.

Metro’s two subway lines run beneath multiple Los Angeles Unified School District campuses in Westlake and Koreatown.

Some in Beverly Hills have hoped that the ties between local officials and the Trump administration could help their cause. Trump’s personal attorney, Marc Kasowitz, is the founding partner in the firm that represents the school district in the Metro lawsuit.

Any change in a funding grant agreement that has already been signed would be “unprecedented,” Sotero

said. A federal lawsuit filed this year by Beverly Hills officials says Metro’s construction area near the campus could expose students to fine particulate matter.

Metro said its studies have found that the cancer risk from the project’s construction would not exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s existing thresholds.

During the prolonged fight, fears of methane gas explosions and health risks have gained traction with Beverly Hills families, who

say they fear their children’s health will be at risk once tunneling begins.

Some parents said they have considered withdrawing their children from school.

They recalled lawsuits, filed more than a decade ago by the law firm that employed Erin Brockovich, that claimed former students had developed cancer from fumes emitted by a campus oil derrick. The cases were later dismissed.

More than 200 parents attended the protest Friday, including Lisa Suriyasat,

who held a sign with a red skull and crossbones that read, “Dear students: your school is no longer safe.”

Suriyasat said she moved from Thailand to Beverly Hills three years ago so that her twin children, now in sixth grade, could attend a safe school. The news of Metro’s tunnel plans, she said, “was shocking.”

The protest sparked some ridicule from critics, who said students had been indoctrinated by school officials or were being trained as NIMBYs, shorthand for “Not in My Backyard.”

Former Beverly Hills school board member Myra Demeter told The Times that she was mortified and outraged by the protests, saying: “The resources and efforts of the school board should be to educate students, not excuse them from classes and use them as pawns.”

Sean Toobi, 17, a senior and the student representative to the Beverly Hills school board, said students, not the district, planned the rally. As for accusations that students are NIMBYs? “Of course we have that stigma — we’re Beverly Hills,” he said.

But, he said, students want to move the subway, not kill it. A delay in the project’s timeline would be worth it to protect their health, he said.

Sotero said safety is Metro’s “No. 1 priority.” Metro has used state records, historic and aerial photos, and magnetic technology that detect subterranean metal to map out the location of dozens of abandoned oil wells on campus, he said.

If crews did find a new well, Sotero said, construction would stop until state officials approved the plan for removing it.

“We’re not just going to go tunneling,” Sotero said. “We’re taking all precautions necessary.”

Tunneling on the Beverly Hills route is scheduled to begin next summer and last about a year and a half, Sotero said. The tunneling machine will be beneath the high school for a month or two, he said, and will be far enough below the surface that students will not feel it.

laura.nelson@latimes.com

Twitter: @laura\_nelson