LA GOVERNANCE REFORM PROJECT

Final Recommendations

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Final Recommendations

- We plan to accompany this event with a variety of press availabilities, a process that is underway.
- We have coordinated with partners at Common Cause and the Our LA Coalition to provide as much momentum possible and to illustrate the breadth of support for these proposals.

- Our recommendations include:
  - Council Size and School Board Size
  - Independent Redistricting Commissions for Each Institution
  - Package of Important Ethics Reforms

RESEARCH INFORMED

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUPS

The Los Angeles Governance Reform Project contracted with Ebony Marketing Systems to conduct 12 focus groups of LA Voters, grouped by race and ethnicity as well as gender and sexual expression. Focus group informants represented every corner of Los Angeles (including all 15 council districts) and spanned socio-economic and occupational diversity. 56% had lived in Los Angeles 21 or more years; 44% 20 years or less.

POLL OF LOS ANGELES REGISTERED VOTERS

The Los Angeles Governance Reform Project retained Interviewing Services of America (ISA) to conduct a poll of 1624 registered voters representative of the diversity of the Los Angeles electorate. The poll was conducted in English and Spanish, by a mixture of online and telephone sampling. Raw data were subject to post-stratification weighting to match known population characteristics. The margin-of-error is +/- 2.43%

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING

Establish two independent commissions, one for City of Los Angeles and one for LAUSD.

The Commissioners would be selected in a multi-stage process that

- Screens applicants for eligibility,
- Randomly selects from among the screened group, and
- Tasks the fist half of selectees with the selection of the remainder to ensure representation.

We would impose a 3-year residency in Los Angeles (or the LAUSD catchment), disclosure requirements for political donations, and transparency rules.

- Has as broad a pool as possible for application, essentially all adult residents;

We establish a calendar for decennial implementation.

Importantly, we propose an intermediate implementation to redraw districts in advance of the 2028 election.

Establishing IRCs is broadly supported

Are district lines better drawn by officials who run for election or by a neutral agency?

	Weighted Frequency	Percent
Neutral party	1,239	76%
Elected officials	385	24%
Weighted Base	**1,624**	**100%**

Focus groups across race and ethnicity supported an independent approach to make the process clearer and fairer. Angelenos envisioned the participation of commissioners representing all aspects of the community. They also noted that appointment is not the sole option; several groups discussed electing commissioners.

If on the ballot today, would you vote for or against an independent redistricting commission?

	Weighted Frequency	Percent
I would vote FOR independent redistricting	1,222	75%
I would vote AGAINST independent redistricting	401	25%
Weighted Base	**1,624**	**100%**

I would vote FOR independent redistricting for the School Board districts	1,230	76%
I would vote AGAINST independent redistricting for the School Board districts	394	24%
Weighted Base	**1,624**	**100%**

REDUCING SIZE OF COUNCIL DISTRICTS

- We would increase the size of the Council to 25 districts:
  - Twenty single-member-districts to reduce the ratio of population to representative
  - Plus five regional members, each representing four nested districts;
    - The “regional” seats provide two points of contact with the Council for every Angeleno;
    - The representation of each locale by more than one member reduces the “veto” approach to land-use which empowered single members of the council with troublesome authority.

- Possible ways to cut costs of expansion; focus on overall council budget:
  - We propose to cap expenditures on Council to reassure skeptical voters…
  - Our budgetary analysis makes clear that even an expanded council will cost less than .5% of the city budget;
  - LA’s expenditures would be less than or comparable with other cities.
  - 85% of voters thought cost was an important factor. 65% of voters were more likely to support the expansion if it included a cap on costs of 1%.

Enlarging the Council is viewed favorably

An impressive 76% Support enlargement to 21 seats, and 66% would support at least 25.

Would you favor increasing the size of the city council from 15 to at least 21?

	Weighted Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,227	76%
No	397	24%
Weighted Base	**1,624**	**100%**

Would you favor increasing the size of the city council from 15 to at least 25?

	Weighted Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,065	87%
No	162	13%
Weighted Base	**1,227**	**100%**

The 66% reflects the 87% of the initial group favoring expansion to 21…

Focus groups also thought a closer connection between Angeleno and representative was a good idea and some groups suggested that one possible outcome would be a more diverse council. Their chief concerns were costs (top concern) and trustworthiness of council members (second concern).

Comparable reforms for LAUSD

- We propose enlarging the LAUSD Board from seven seats to eleven seats:
  - ➢71% of voters supported an 11-seat School Board.
- A comparable IRC process is created to draw School Board district lines, with IRC commissioners coming from all parts of the LAUSD.
  - ➢76% of voters supported an IRC for the School Board.

ETHICS REFORMS

Updated Preliminary Recommendations*

Prior preliminary recommendations now final:

Ethics Commission Authority

- Commission approval of City Council ethics legislation
- Ability to place policy recommendations directly on the ballot

***LAGRP recommends Ethics Commission changes should be done in the charter, not by ordinance.**

ETHICS REFORMS

Additional Final Recommendations*

Commission Size

- The Ethics Commission should increase beyond the current 5 commissioners to 7
  - The two additional commissioner seats should be appointed by the Mayor and the Council President, respectively.
  - Ethics Commission should be subject to same selection criteria as IRC members

Commission Staff

- The Commission should have the power and resources to hire independent legal counsel.

Budget Protection

- The Commission's budget should be protected from mid-period revision or abrupt year-to-year reduction.
  - The Commission should be protected from receiving unfunded mandates.

Rules and Regulations

- The Ethics Commission should be authorized to place policy recommendations by a supermajority vote directly on the ballot as a voter-approved ordinance.

*** LAGRP recommends ethics commission changes should be done in the charter, not by ordinance.**

ETHICS REFORM IS WIDELY SUPPORTED

8 IN 10 VOTERS SURVEYED the level of corruption in the Los Angeles City Council should at least raise concern and/or is more than most government bodies.

~9 IN 10 VOTERS believe ethics rules should be made stronger (either a bit (42%) or much stronger (47%))

Do you think the ethics rules that regulate the actions of elected officials should be reformed and made stronger?

	Weighted Frequency	Percent
Rules are too lax and need to be made much stronger	767	47%
The rules are doing OK, but could be a bit stronger	681	42%
Rules are functioning well and do not require reform	176	11%
Weighted Base	**1,624**	**100%**

Focus groups also thought ethics reform was necessary but emphasized enhanced enforcement of the Council's Code of Ethics as a primary mechanism for reform

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Thank you for joining!

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