



## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Los Angeles Governance Reform Project Interim Report Calls for Independent Redistricting, Larger City Council and Ethics Reform**

**LOS ANGELES** - A new report released today by the Los Angeles Governance Reform Project (LAGRP), a group of university leaders and researchers, calls for sweeping reforms to the City of Los Angeles governance structure. The interim report calls for the creation of two independent redistricting commissions to draw city council and school board lines, to expand the city council to 25 members, 4 of whom would be elected at-large, and provisions to empower the city's Ethics Commission.

The LAGRP strongly favors bringing these measures to the voters in November of 2024, an election in which voter participation would be higher.

"Los Angeles is a dynamic city that is constantly evolving. Yet the city council's structure is essentially the same as it was 100 years ago," said Ange-Marie Hancock, Ph.D., Dean's Professor of Gender Studies and Political Science at the University of Southern California and co-chair of the LAGRP. "We came together because we needed an independent analysis prioritizing the needs of residents. Our goal is to provide recommendations that help make Los Angeles' governance structure represent the city's diverse population and set rigorous standards of accountability."

Specifically, these reforms will:

- **Create two independent redistricting commissions.** An independent redistricting commission would be composed of residents 18 years and older and would be selected in an application process. A similar commission would be created for the LAUSD Board of Education. Commissioners would be drawn from geographical regions of the city, based on community planning districts. A comparable geographic approach would be taken with the school board commission.
- **Expand the city council.** The current council has 15 members representing approximately 260,000 residents. The report recommends expanding the council to 25 members, comprised of 21 members elected by district to each serve approximately 180,000 residents and four at-large members elected in staggered years.
- **Reform the city's ethics regulations.** The report recommends strengthening the LA City Ethics Commission's capacity to influence and create ethics ordinances, including placing ordinance measures directly on the ballot with a 4/5 commission vote. brings forth these measures. The purpose is to integrate ethics reform into the independent redistricting and reduction of council districts.

The Interim Report is the product of more than six months of thorough research, analysis and deliberation guided by the core principles of fostering accountability, promoting good government, reducing corruption, and strengthening positive intergroup relations in our diverse city.

Members of the LAGRP team monitored and stayed in touch with the various reform efforts and discussions currently swirling in Los Angeles. They spoke with leaders at city hall, organizations such as Common Cause, Catalyst, the Civic Alliance, and the League of Women Voters. They also listened to the views of community-based organizations, new civic groups pursuing governance reform, and thinkers and writers on local governance issues.

"The proposed reforms are aimed at creating a city government that is responsive, accountable, and truly representative of the people it serves. By implementing these changes, we can begin to rebuild public trust in our city government," added Gary Segura, Ph.D., Professor at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs and co-chair of the LAGRP. "We acknowledge this is an iterative process and we welcome questions and feedback. The proposals presented in this interim report serve as a starting point, intended to spark a meaningful and actionable conversation that will drive reform forward."

The draft recommendations in the report are presented with the intention of fostering public discussion and gathering input for further improvement before the proposals are brought to the city council for consideration and transformation into ballot language in the fall of 2023. In keeping with its inclusive approach, LAGRP will actively seek public input through surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each recommendation. Subsequently, the final recommendations will be shared with the city council and the community well in advance to meet the election deadlines for these measures to be placed on the 2024 ballot.

For more information about LAGRP, and to download the interim report visit [www.lagovreform.org](http://www.lagovreform.org).

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#### **About the LA Governance Reform Project**

*The Los Angeles Governance Reform Project (LAGRP) brings together academics and researchers, from across the region to develop independent governance reform proposals that will advance a more transparent, accountable, and community-driven City of Los Angeles municipal government. The LAGRP's mission is to produce independent nonpartisan reform recommendations informed by research and practice that not only inform the policy-making process but helps inform broader civic and community engagement.*

*To maintain the independence of this project, this work is being funded entirely by private philanthropy, including the California Community Foundation, the ECMC Foundation, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation.*