

Communication from Public

Name: Liz Amsden

Date Submitted: 09/12/2022 10:39 AM

Council File No: 11-1020-S3

Comments for Public Posting: I am not sure why the urgency to change "Budget Advocates" which is the organization to "budget advocacy" which is the work they have done for over 20 years. The Budget Advocates were originally established by Jim Hahn's office to help address the obligation under Article 909 of the Charter that Neighborhood Councils communicate their budget priorities to the Mayor and City Council. That their purview has evolved over time is testament to the Charter as a living document. The Budget Advocates never have worked FOR the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment; they have worked FOR the Neighborhood Councils and DONE has usually been very proactive in helping with its mission. The Budget Advocates are NOT an alliance. They are elected from and by the Neighborhood Councils so the GM should get over her pique and accept that they are elected officials. Which is more than she is. For years Los Angeles has taken pride in the grassroots democracy epitomized by the Neighborhood Council system. Who better represents communities throughout the City? An at-will appointee or the Budget Advocates? DONE's purpose under the Charter was to develop the plan and EMPOWER the Neighborhood Councils. Not set themselves up as a fiefdom with board and committee members their serfs. Those on the Budget and Finance Committee are very familiar with many individual Budget Advocates and their work through the years and I hope that you understand that trying to make the Budget Advocates subservient to ANYONE is not in the best interests of the City or the neighborhoods. I strongly recommend you reject this motion in its entirety and direct the General Manager of DONE to stop impeding the good work Budget Advocates do. In this case, by restoring the ability of the Neighborhood Councils to contribute funds to the Budget Advocates for their work.

Communication from Public

Name: David Hunter, Budget Advocate Region 7

Date Submitted: 09/12/2022 10:11 PM

Council File No: 11-1020-S3

Comments for Public Posting: The Budget Advocates were established nine years ago by then-Mayor Villaraigosa to implement an important advisory role in the development of the city budget, one which is explicitly granted to the public in the City Charter. The charter does not specifically name the Budget Advocates, nor outline their current form. The obligation to "put it in writing" fell to the city at the time the BAs were formed, and they neglected it. But the failure of the city to enshrine the democratic rights of the public in 2013 should not be wielded against the public in 2022. The Budget Advocates are currently funded at will by the Neighborhood Council system. They piece together their budget from donations made by each of the 99 Neighborhood Councils. These donations, of hundreds of dollars a pieve, are each first approved at Budget Committees that mirror the Council's, and, if approved subsequently moved to the Neighborhood Council at large. Each member of the Neighborhood Council must then voice their aye vote for the donation at a roll call vote. This practice has existed in this form for nine years with the explicit participation of the public and numerous city departments. Though never granted legal status by the city it is clearly a de facto "city organization." 11-1020-S3 would prevent Neighborhood Councils from making these donations and instead allow them only to donate that money back to a fund administered by DONE. This represents a 100% defunding of the Budget Advocates, while saving the city no money. The city's justifications for this defunding, which change across various documents, are scattered and incomprehensible. Instead of this anti-democratic action, City Council should remedy their past mistake and protect the Budget Advocates in writing. If the Budget Advocates ever stop serving their function in the eyes of the public, they will stop funding the organization through their Neighborhood Councils.