

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Mike Feinstein

**Date Submitted:** 05/13/2024 12:27 PM

**Council File No:** 23-1027

**Comments for Public Posting:** CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT CHARTER REFORM BODY SPECIFICALLY AND ONLY FOR CITY COUNCIL SIZE AND POWERS AND OVERALL QUESTIONS OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY Instead of an independent body with the ability to place charter amendments directly upon the ballot for a public vote, the Ad Hoc Committee is recommending an advisory Commission to the City Council, with eight seats directly appointed by elected officials — four by the Mayor, and two each by the City Council President and Pro-Tem, with five more nominated by the eight appointed members, subject to City Council approval. Most profoundly, the Council will exercise final authority on what charter amendments go onto the ballot for a public vote, including items where the Council arguably has a direct conflict-of-interest. After all of the corruption and self-dealing charges against City Council members in recent years, what could go wrong with this approach? The City Council recently congratulated itself on sending an IRC to the November 2024 ballot, responding to the existing conflict-of-interest where Council members choose the district boundaries in which they would run, by placing this decision in the hands of an independently established commission instead. Yet now the Council seems prepared to institutionalize conflict-of-interest in the charter reform process, where elected officials would substantially affect how their own powers and numbers are debated. Such questions should be addressed instead by a separate and independent charter reform body, like an Independent Redistricting Commission or Civic Assembly (<https://www.dailynews.com/2024/04/17/time-for-a-civic-assembly-for-los-angeles-charter-reform/>), with the ability to place charter amendments directly before the voters. A range of alternatives should be widely vetted and debated via this process — on City Council size and powers, electoral systems, and increasing public engagement. Accessible in-person independent Commission meetings, large and small, should be held in all 15 City Council districts; and many forms of technology should be brought to bear to ensure wide participation from the great diversity of Los Angeles. Most importantly, the attention of this independent Commission should be undivided, because charter amendments they recommend may shape representation and power in Los Angeles for decades. The rest of the Charter can be under the separate review of the elected-official-driven Charter Reform Commission currently being established by the City Council. They'll have more than enough to do, without diluting needed focus on Council size and powers, as multiple amendments on other Charter areas are already expected from at least 11 City offices and departments, and more will come forward via the public process. Therefore the City Council should plan for two separate charter review commissions, with non-duplicative scopes, with one being independent of the City Council to focus on issues where the City Council has clear conflicts of interest. Los Angeles has a rare opportunity to redistribute political power and improve representation and governance. But to rebuild confidence in local government, this process can't be biased by elected officials. ??LA City Council members need to think outside of themselves as creatures of the system they inhabit, and more directly empower the people they were elected to represent — via an independent charter reform process on local democracy. The city's historic moment of opportunity demands no less. Signed Mike Feinstein Santa Monica, CA Current Secretary, Green Party of Los Angeles County Former Santa Monica Mayor and City Council member

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Brett Shears

**Date Submitted:** 05/13/2024 01:16 PM

**Council File No:** 23-1027

**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Councilmembers, I am writing to strongly urge the Council to adopt the recommendations presented by groups like Fair Rep LA, California Common Cause, Unrig LA, and many others. Specifically, I urge the Council to adopt recommendations that bring about the following: 1) Make the proposed Commission as apolitical as it can be by having its membership composed of fewer political appointees and more appointees selected in a public process that is transparent and easily accessible; 2) Make the proposed Commission as autonomous as it can be by, for example, giving it the ability to place measures directly on the ballot and retain outside counsel; and 3) Give the proposed Commission as much funding as it needs (i.e. more than it receives in this current proposal) to retain its much-needed independence and be open to appointees from a variety of backgrounds. Thank you for considering the work of all the people and groups who have put so much into making this much-needed change a reality. Brett Shears, Silver Lake

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Clara Solis

**Date Submitted:** 05/13/2024 07:09 PM

**Council File No:** 23-1027

**Comments for Public Posting:** I urge you to place Charter Reform on the November Ballot with the following changes: LA's Ethics Commission should have the same power as San Francisco's Ethics Commission to place ordinances on the ballot. The Ethics Commission also needs a larger guaranteed budget with adjustments for inflation to allow it to keep up with the ever-growing size and number of campaigns. Candidates, stakeholders, and the public interest all are harmed when there aren't enough auditors and other staff to do their job. The proposed \$6.5 million budget is inadequate and allows little more than preservation of current staffing levels.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Richard Marquez

**Date Submitted:** 05/13/2024 09:51 PM

**Council File No:** 23-1027

**Comments for Public Posting:** GRANT THE ETHICS COMMISSION AUTHORITY TO PLACE ORDINANCES RELATED TO ITS MANDATE DIRECTLY ON THE LOCAL BALLOT — WITHOUT THE CITY COUNCIL HAVING THE FINAL SAY. THE CITY COUNCIL MUST CEDE POWER FOR THE GREATER GOOD!

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Gemma Marquez

**Date Submitted:** 05/13/2024 10:16 PM

**Council File No:** 23-1027

**Comments for Public Posting:** I urge you to place Charter Reform on the November Ballot! Also, LA's Ethics Commission should have the same power as San Francisco's Ethics Commission to place ordinances on the ballot. Placing potential reforms directly to the VOTERS is the RIGHT THING to do!!! It's time to CLEAN-UP City Hall. City Council must CEDE the power for the greater good.