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KAREN BASS
MAYOR

Date: April 23, 2024

To: Honorable Bob Blumenfield, Chair
and Honorable Members of the Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee
c/o City Clerk
Room 340, City Hall

From: Capri Maddox, General Manager
Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department

Subject: **COUNCIL FILE 24-0600 - CIVIL, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY DEPARTMENT
COMMENTS FOR MAYOR'S FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee:

The Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) appreciates Mayor Karen Bass, City Administrative Officer Matthew W. Szabo, and their respective budget staff members. The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Budget allocates critical resources necessary for LA Civil Rights to maintain and strengthen the City's diversity, equity, and accountability.

(1) FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 PROPOSED ACHIEVEMENTS

LA Civil Rights is grateful for the opportunity to outline the significant City impact the Department plans to achieve with the allocation provided in the proposed budget. The Department is committed to combating discrimination, preventing hate, supporting the Department's five commissions, and addressing equity disparities throughout the City, and in specifically devastated communities, to advance its mission of upholding equity and inclusion for all in Los Angeles. In response to the Los Angeles City Council's Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee's request, please review the Department's five proposed key achievements for next fiscal year with the resources allocated in the Mayor's Proposed Budget:

I. Civil Rights Enforcement

As a result of the Department's highly covered press conference with Council District 13 of the first filed citation under the City's Civil and Human Rights Law, there has been a tremendous increase in discrimination complaints and inquiries from members of the public. The Department cited Smart & Final Stores, LLC and Non-Stop Security Services for discriminatory practices, demonstrating violations impacting community members. To date, LA Civil Rights received more than 1,000 inquiries, including 164 new inquiries in the last four weeks alone. Of these inquiries, 49 cases have advanced to full investigations, showing thorough examination and swift resolution for constituents. Additionally, 22 cases have been referred to confidential mediation provided by Pepperdine Caruso School of Law at no cost to the City. The steady increase in cases will

advance the Department's efforts to pursue citations, which could potentially generate revenue for the City through fees and fines.

Next fiscal year, we anticipate an increased caseload and will work with our Commission on Civil Rights (CCR) to investigate and manage the incoming complaints. The Civil Rights Enforcement (CRE) Unit, along with CCR, has quasi-judicial authority to address discrimination complaints in private sector commerce, education, employment, and housing, and our jurisdiction may expand soon based on pending legislation.

CRE will continue to increase program knowledge throughout the City internally and externally. CRE also conducted a series of webinars for council district staff last summer. It is currently working with Council District 8 on issues of digital discrimination. Lastly, CRE will continue to promote our services through community outreach and increased partnerships with leading voices in the legal community, including the LA Law Library, local affinity groups, and others to fight discrimination.

II. Community Engagement and Outreach

With the current allocation, LA Civil Rights will be able to expand *LA For All*, which has already become the largest anti-hate campaign in City government history. During summer 2024, LA Civil Rights will showcase compelling artistic interpretations of the campaign by diverse Cal State LA students. LA Civil Rights will also launch *Just Say Hello*, an expansion of the LA For All campaign. The popularity of the award-winning LA For All campaign has allowed LA Civil Rights the opportunity to develop a donation/exchange model facilitated by utilizing current staff members to accept donations through the Civil and Human Rights Community Engagement Fund for LA For All merchandise, which has the potential to generate revenue for the City.

Through targeted outreach efforts, including advertisements and strategic partnerships, LA Civil Rights has disseminated information across all 15 City Council Districts, and continues to build lasting relationships with diverse media outlets. Since July 1, 2023, LA Civil Rights' print, broadcast, and online engagement reports reflect a total potential editorial reach of 390 million individuals across the nation and internationally. Based on the success of recent press conferences, it is likely that our media presence and reach will grow under the leadership of the recently filled Principal Project Coordinator and Public Information Director I positions, the introduction of public relations tools, and the creation of new *Forward Together* podcast episodes led by our new Public Relations Specialist.

III. Hate Prevention

In response to the 18% rise in hate crimes highlighted by a January 2024 Thrive study, the Department has and will continue to increase its efforts to combat discrimination and hate, and promote inclusivity. Proactive outreach initiatives, such as hosting multi-faith roundtables and gatherings, creating targeted outreach, and amplifying heritage month celebrations, advance inclusive conversations throughout the City. The Department co-hosted a series of three roundtables in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the California Civil Rights Department, and continues to host various meetings with clergy members from the Los Angeles Council of Religious Leaders.

The Department's continued participation in heritage month events, including Filipino Heritage Month, Native American History Month, Latino Heritage Month, LGBTQIA+ Pride Month, Women's History Month, and African American Heritage Month, provides a platform to facilitate robust dialogue among diverse communities, establishing a sense of unity and understanding.

In addition to promoting a sense of belonging and cultural unity, LA Civil Rights stands up to hate, and uses the LA For All campaign's inclusive messaging as a proactive measure in responding to bias. As a swift response to recent hate crimes and incidents, the Department installed LA For All banners in areas affected by antisemitic and anti-Asian acts. Additionally, the Department rapidly responds to threats to our most vulnerable communities. Most recently, the TransLatin@ Coalition received a bomb threat and the Department, along with the County of Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations and the LAPD, addressed the public in a press conference, reaffirming that hate has no place in Los Angeles. This extensive outreach demonstrates the Department's continued commitment to combating any form of hate, extremism, and discrimination while promoting a safe and inclusive City. This commitment remains unwavering, especially as Los Angeles likely faces a likely surge in hate crimes related to the upcoming national election happening during the upcoming fiscal year. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data detailed in a 2023 report from the The Leadership Conference Education Fund, a national civil rights group, shows the prevalence of increased hate crimes during presidential elections.

IV. Commission Support

The Department's support for its five commissions and advisory boards, including the Human Relations Commission, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Civil Rights, Transgender Advisory Council, and the Reparations Advisory Commission will continue. LA Civil Rights and its 41 commissioners have been actively engaged in initiatives to address pressing issues and promote equity across the City. For example, the Human Relations Commission has organized ten Young Adult Dinner Dialogues to bring youth and LAPD patrol officers together for community safety discussions. We appreciate the partnership with Council District 14, sponsoring the Boyle Heights events. The Department is preparing a findings report of recurring themes and concerns to recommend possible next steps and partnerships to LAPD. The Transgender Advisory Council (TAC) will continue to organize the successful Trans and Non-binary job fairs and the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) Community Gathering and Candle Lighting. The TAC is appreciative of the partnerships with Council District 11 and Council District 9 in supporting these events. TAC will also help coordinate online training for City employees regarding Transgender and Gender Diversity Inclusivity Training (TAGDIT) and oversee the Midnight Stroll to help prevent violence against the transgender community. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will continue to elevate and promote women's work in the City through its initiatives while researching policies disproportionately affecting women and recommending alternatives. CSW appreciates the Mayor's Office and council offices in their partnerships to host the Annual Pioneer Women's Award, which is being held in September this year. The Commission on Civil Rights will continue to investigate discrimination complaints and enforce corrective action. The Reparations Advisory Commission (RAC) will continue to conduct its study on the historical and contemporary impact of City policies and actions on Black Angelenos. With the Department's academic and fund development partners contracted for this study, the RAC collected community responses to learn about personal harms experience and perspectives on an ideal reparations program. RAC received 642 responses from its formal, public survey. Data on its focus groups and one-on-one interviews is forthcoming. These efforts emphasize the Department's continued commitment to equity and inclusivity in the City, facilitate meaningful engagement with constituents, and highlight the expertise of our Mayor-appointed commissioners, which ensures transparency and inclusion of the voices of constituents.

V. The Office of Race and Equity (ORE)

ORE will continue to provide programs and policy recommendations to increase historically underserved Angelenos' access to community discourse and decision-making processes; and reduce the impacts of harms caused by decades of structural and institutional racism affecting educational attainment, income and generational wealth, and health and wellbeing. The ORE's

equity and empowerment approach to serving Los Angeles allows LA Civil Rights to continue supporting the most vulnerable communities, while addressing persistent equity challenges that affect residents citywide.

To ensure the ORE can address equity issues for communities citywide, ORE will continue to manage upward mobility programming, which since 2021, has provided educational tools and pathways to the middle class and beyond. These programs are designed to be inclusive, welcoming students from all backgrounds and communities. ORE recently hosted its second LA Law Day, introducing more than 100 students to legal careers and the law school admissions process, and also held its first LA Medical Day webinar with more than 60 attendees. ORE also hosted its second virtual Homebuyer Seminar, as well as three financial literacy webinars: January's "Truth in Lending," February's "FAFSA and Student Loans," and March's "Paying for College." As a result of helpful programming, Upward Mobility education and tools are being developed to address sector-specific needs. ORE is slated to collaborate with Council District 3 to host a Behavioral Health Day informing students about homelessness crisis intervention and treatment careers. It will partner with the Mayor's Office of Community Safety to host a financial literacy series for individuals returning home after incarceration.

In addition to providing free, public education, ORE authored reports and recommendations for City solutions to complex issues through its policy equity lens. As a complement to its Spring 2023 equity analysis on disproportionate violence against Black women and girls in Los Angeles (Council File 22-0102), ORE partnered with Council Districts 8, 9 and 10 to produce "Blooming Beyond," a resource guide to support survivors of gender-based violence. ORE has also reported on its process and recommendations to establish a City land acknowledgment statement honoring Native Americans and Indigenous communities (Council File 22-1142). In February 2024, ORE also submitted a retrospective report on its L.A. REPAIR Peace and Healing Center Program (Council File 21-1187) detailing the pilot program's development, implementation, and evaluation.

The ORE continues to conduct research for forthcoming reports, equity analyses, and initiatives requested by the City Council, which include an assessment of the impact of City services on Black people experiencing homelessness (Council File 21-0702); and a proposed public information program and methodology to address digital discrimination (Council File 20-0761-S-1). ORE will also submit a revised report detailing increased engagement with Tribal groups and the Los Angeles City / County Native American Indian Commission. ORE is currently drafting two reports that will be submitted during Fiscal Year 2024-2025: A landmark study on the City of Los Angeles' role in harms experienced by Black Angelenos, and corresponding recommendations from the department's Reparations Advisory Commission; and the ORE's retrospective report detailing the L.A. REPAIR Participatory Budgeting Program's implementation and community vote in Cohort 2 REPAIR Zones (Council File 21-1187). The ORE is committed to making significant progress on literature reviews, qualitative research, and writing the Council-proposed reports listed above.

The Department's Volunteer Corps, which is also administered by the ORE, will also continue its community outreach efforts by having a presence at events, such as the Poesia y Musica Event in Council District 1, tabling at the Freedom Fest Resource Fair in Council District 8, and engaging with constituents at the Leimert Park and Central Avenue jazz festivals in Council Districts 10 and 9, respectively. Volunteer Corps helps extend the ORE's reach amidst limited staff hiring. From November 2022 to November 2023, the ORE was able to attend 52 events, many with the support of 10 volunteers. The Volunteer Corps collectively dedicated 186 hours of service across 45 events in various Los Angeles locations.

The ORE also manages the Los Angeles Reforms for Equity and Public Acknowledgment of Institutional Racism (L.A. REPAIR) Innovation Fund. The fund, made possible after City Council's

authorization of a \$12 million transfer of funding from the City's Unappropriated Balance (Council File 21-1187), was a part of the City's response to address long-standing income- and race-based disparities that were exacerbated by high COVID-19 cases and mortality rates in specific neighborhoods. The fund seeks to repair the effects of disparities in housing, Internet access, health and wellbeing, prevalence of environmental hazards, and other quality of life areas. As a result of the L.A. REPAIR Innovation Fund, the ORE has launched and implemented two complementary flagship programs, the Participatory Budgeting and Peace and Healing Center programs. Serving nine communities ranging from the San Fernando Valley to Wilmington, both programs emphasize community definitions of repair and healing to promote equitable access to quality-of-life resources with local community-based organizations. The L.A. REPAIR Participatory Budgeting Program has garnered robust community participation, collecting ideas from community members and ballots during its community vote phase. Community members submitted a total of 1,405 community ideas, including 279 from Cohort 1's three REPAIR Zones (Boyle Heights, Mission Hills-North Hills-Panorama City, and Southeast Los Angeles), and 1,126 ideas from Cohort 2's six REPAIR Zones (Arleta-Pacoima, Harbor Gateway-Wilmington-Harbor City, Skid Row, South Los Angeles, West Adams-Baldwin Village-Leimert Park, and Westlake). The L.A. REPAIR Participatory Budgeting Program reported receipt of more than 2,400 eligible ballots for the Cohort 1 vote. A tally of the Cohort 2 ballots and an official report is forthcoming. Community organizations selected in the Cohort 1 Vote will collectively receive grant funding totaling more than \$3 million. Organizations selected in Cohort 2 Vote's community organizations will receive grant funding totaling \$5.4 million. The program has hosted more than 200 participants in informational webinars, 15 advisory meetings per cohort, and 54 constituents in each Advisory Committee. In March 2023, ORE collaborated with council members whose districts intersect with Cohort 2 REPAIR Zones to provide six proposer fairs in 10 days. Final data on the L.A. REPAIR Peace and Healing Center Program and was not available to the Department at the time of this report. By supporting events and activities across all nine REPAIR Zones, the Department continues to promote healing and resilience, advocating for a more equitable future for historically underserved communities.

(2) PROPOSED CHANGES

After thoroughly assessing the Department's critical needs in alignment with our mission and priorities and considering the City's budgetary constraints, LA Civil Rights respectfully requests the following changes for consideration by the Budget, Finance, and Innovation Committee:

- **Add/Delete one Senior Project Coordinator and one Human Relations Advocate for two Community Affairs Advocates positions - \$77,936 + Indirect Costs**

The Department requests nine-months funding for two critical new Community Affairs Advocate positions. The first position in ORE will lead critical hate crime prevention initiatives and foster unity among diverse cultural groups. This position will plan and host the Department's annual calendar of proactive hate crime prevention events by celebrating all cultures and communities. The employee holding this position will connect with community partners, such as YMCA, Proyecto Pastoral, the American Red Cross, Community Build, and faith-based organizations. This senior-level position, will not only play a key role in developing and implementing outreach plans but will also assist in alleviating staffing challenges.

The second new Community Affairs Advocate position will serve as a vital link between the Department and the community, representing the Department at essential gatherings and cultivating stakeholder relationships. This position will not only lead the planning and execution of Departmental public events but will also contribute to addressing staffing challenges.

These positions are imperative to tackle the current challenges of community engagement, public events management, and staffing deficiencies, which are critical for upholding civil rights and equity. These positions hold senior authority, which is essential for executing effective leadership of several initiatives within the Department. Retention is a significant challenge due to the appeal of other City departments that have the ability to offer promotions, senior-level classifications, remote work options, and alternative work schedules.

LA Civil Rights staff operate at a high level, often exceeding expectations with limited funding, and their expertise is highly sought after. Retention of high performing staff members is an issue because the loss of even one staff member from such a small department creates extreme challenges, as employees typically manage multiple major projects, taking valuable institutional knowledge with them. Authority for these senior positions is not just advancement, but is a critical investment in our staff's growth, development, and the Department's effectiveness.

- **Add/Delete one Project Coordinator and one Human Relations Advocate for two Management Analysts - \$7,442 + Indirect Costs**

The Department requests nine-months of funding for two critical positions: A Management Analyst in ORE and a Management Analyst in Operations. The first position reporting to ORE is vital to conducting data analysis and research, and supporting strategic planning efforts. This position is dedicated to utilizing administrative databases and advanced statistical tools for research. The advanced analytics provided will be crucial for report backs requested by the City Council to evaluate Department programs. The work performed by an employee in this position will also advance opportunities for possible philanthropic grants to generate revenue for the City.

The second position in Operations will provide indispensable administrative support for efficient Department functions. This position is critical for compiling vital statistics, maintaining records, and performing various operational tasks, including providing procurement oversight. This position will serve as the liaison between the Department and the City Clerk's Accounting team providing financial reports essential for analysis by other City departments.

These two requested positions are designed to address specific needs within the Department, providing a targeted approach to enhancing civil rights enforcement, equity programming, volunteer engagement, data analytics, research, and overall operational efficiency.

- **No Reductions Proposed for Contractual Services - \$90,638**

There are multiple challenges in reaching and engaging communities affected by discrimination. Since our Civil Rights Enforcement press conference and citation to Smart and Final, there has been a notable surge in program awareness, with about a 160% increase in phone and online inquiries in just one month. The proposed reduction to the civil rights enforcement outreach contractual services line (\$27,192) presents a significant challenge in providing constituents with the essential updates and support needed to meet our increasing demand.

Additionally, reductions to the internal and external training line (\$63,446) will negatively affect our staff and City families' development efforts on equity topics. These reductions come at a time when this young, small department with less than 50 positions is already navigating a critical hiring process, making it challenging to recruit and promote for essential functions.

- **Regularize Two Principal Project Coordinator Positions – No Cost**

Providing regular authority for these critical positions may increase the likelihood of retaining employees currently holding the Principal Project Coordinator positions. These positions lead some of the most visible programs within the LA Civil Rights Department. The first position currently administers the \$10 million L.A. REPAIR Participatory Budgeting Program, upward mobility programming, and policy equity reports. The second position manages communications, including bi-weekly newsletters, public relations, social media, and the LA For All campaign.

(3) REPURPOSING EXISTING POSITIONS

LA Civil Rights is committed to exploring different ways of repurposing existing positions or restructuring so long as ongoing programs and initiatives are not adversely impacted. Despite the current staffing constraints and the multitude of equity programs and engagement opportunities the Department oversees, LA Civil Rights remains dedicated to maintaining operational efficiency for Angelenos, even while operating at a bare minimum.

The Department currently operates with 36 filled positions out of 44 authorized for FY 2024, resulting in an 18% vacancy rate. Despite being one of the city's smaller Departments, LA Civil Rights continues to deliver for the City of Los Angeles. Our output is evident through consistent presence at equity events, hosting several anti-hate events each month, and developing inclusivity initiatives. However, each vacant position significantly impacts our operation. While we have created efficiencies, this level of strain on current employees is not sustainable in the long term. Several employees have recently vacated these positions, and although the Personnel Department has been supportive in filling these positions, we faced extreme difficulty when attempting to overcome promotion, hiring, and retention limitations, including partial fiscal year position funding, exemption requests, substitute authority requests, emergency appointment requests, and available classification lists.

The seven resolution authority positions that were not continued in the proposed budget, coupled with inevitable attrition, will profoundly impact the efficiency, capacity, and overall success of the LA Civil Rights Department. The elimination of the Management Analyst position in our Finance, Accounting, and Budgeting Unit and the proposed restructuring of current accounting support in the City Clerk's Office will likely exacerbate ongoing issues of fulfilling financial obligations to vendors and community-based organizations. Not continuing this position will also severely limit the Department's ability to handle vendor inquiries, FMS functions, and execute contracts promptly.

The two Administrative Clerk positions not continued directly and immediately impact daily service delivery to our constituents, including front counter operations, coordination and posting of commission agendas as mandated by the Brown Act, communication flow, website updates, social media engagement, and quality control measures.

Not continuing the Customer Services Representative position obstructs ORE's ability to respond to urgent City Council motions, perform policy research, mobilize in the community, and manage equity-focused programming, which ultimately limits engagement with constituents. Not continuing ORE positions will not only extend report back time by approximately three months due to the volume of work each employee will be required to perform, but will also prevent employees from completing enforcement tasks due to lack of capacity. The Management Analyst position in ORE is crucial for managing the L.A. REPAIR Program's remaining funds tasks, including overseeing grant management, developing reports, and facilitating community engagement. The Human Relations Advocate position in ORE is essential for invoice processing, grant management, and continued program implementation within the L.A. REPAIR Program.

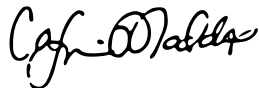
Lastly, the Project Coordinator position in ORE is being requested as an offset for a new Management Analyst position described above. Although it is crucial for supporting the ORE operations and ensuring the efficient execution of strategic initiatives, a Management Analyst classification would be the best fit for our operations.

(4) EQUITY LENS

LA Civil Rights uses an equity lens in all our initiatives and assignments, including submitting our budget requests. We demonstrate our commitment to equity by prioritizing limited resources to continue to address discrimination, prevent hate crimes, support the City's five commissions, and address disparities throughout the City. These requests align with our racial and gender equity action plans, guide our outreach efforts to tackle racial inequities and create opportunities for residents to thrive.

Thank you for considering our requests and for your ongoing support of the LA Civil Rights Department's vital work in promoting equity and reducing violence. As we grow our engagement with Angelenos through empowerment programming, equity initiatives, and civil rights enforcement, it is crucial to secure the staffing and contractual resources to further the Department's goal of creating an LA that is truly for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Capri Maddox".

Capri Maddox, Esq.
General Manager
Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department

CM: FB: NB: DJ