AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR
CHARTER REVIEW

MOTION

In 1991, following the beating of Rodney King, the City of Los Angeles established the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, commonly known as the Christopher Commission, to conduct an independent examination of police leadership, accountability, and oversight. Following an extensive investigation, the Commission produced a landmark report documenting excessive force, racial bias, deficiencies in officer discipline, and systemic failures in civilian oversight.

The Commission's comprehensive findings went beyond individual incidents of misconduct, examining the governance structures that had allowed longstanding institutional problems to persist. Among its most consequential recommendations were strengthening the civilian Board of Police Commissioners, establishing independent oversight mechanisms, and restructuring the authority, appointment, and tenure of the Chief of Police to ensure accountability while protecting the Department from improper political influence.

Notably, the Commission recommended that then-Chief Daryl Gates, who had served for 13 years, begin transitioning out of his position and that future chiefs be limited to two five-year terms. While Gates supported portions of the report, he publicly challenged key governance recommendations, particularly those on the Chief's tenure and civil service protections, defending the existing system against the Commission's proposed reforms.

The Christopher Commission's work established an enduring framework for examining the relationship between police leadership, civilian authority, and democratic accountability. Its findings underscored that effective policing requires more than institutional experience or continuity of leadership, it requires independent scrutiny, meaningful civilian oversight, and governance structures that can hold even the Department's highest-ranking officials accountable.

More than 35 years later, as Los Angeles considers reforms to its City Charter, the Christopher Commission provides an important historical foundation for evaluating the City's police governance structure. Revisiting its findings presents an opportunity to examine how independent oversight has evolved, which recommendations were implemented, and whether additional reforms are warranted to ensure that accountability remains a function of the City's governing institutions rather than the discretion of any individual entrusted with leading them.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), with the assistance of the City Attorney, be instructed to report to the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review at a future meeting on the findings and recommendations of the 1991 Christopher Commission Report, including their historical significance, subsequent implementation through Charter amendments and other reforms, the evolution of civilian oversight and police governance, the balance between police leadership independence and civilian accountability, and any outstanding

recommendations that warrant further consideration as part of the City's ongoing Charter reform process.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA be instructed to identify and conduct outreach to the members, authors, and key contributors to the Christopher Commission Report, or other individuals with direct knowledge of its development and implementation, to explore their participation in a future meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review to provide historical context and firsthand insights into the Commission's findings, recommendations, and lasting impact on police governance in Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY: _____
TIM McOSKER
Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY: _____

ORIGINAL

OCT 16 2026