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June 11, 2012

CF 11-1912-S1

The Honorable Bernard C. Parks, Chair
Education and Neighborhoods Committee
c/o City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Councilmember Parks,

We, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (Commission) write to express our objections and concerns regarding a proposal being discussed by the City Council to require all Neighborhood Councils (NC) to pay for the upcoming 2012 NC elections. The NC system has already shouldered more than its fair share of budget cuts this year, and to further require the individual NCs to pay for all of the costs of the elections would essentially amount to further cuts to their budgets that are unfair and unreasonable.

Funding for the NC system has experienced drastic cuts for the upcoming 2012-2013 fiscal year. In addition to cutting each individual NC's annual budget by 7.5% from \$40,000 to \$37,000, funding for NC elections was slashed by 50% from \$1.1 million in 2010 to \$550,000 for this year. While we commend the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment for its "can do" spirit in agreeing to administer the 2012 elections in place of the City Clerk's office, which insisted it could not properly run elections for less than \$1.1 million and opted out, we remain concerned that such a drastic cut in funding will have negative impacts on NC elections.

The Education and Neighborhoods Committee (ENC) is now considering a proposal that seeks to force all individual NCs to collectively pay for the entire \$550,000 costs for the upcoming NC elections. Such a requirement, if enacted, would be tantamount to an additional cut to NC budgets of an additional \$5,790, and would amount to a total budget cut of 22% for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Such drastic cuts are unfair and would hobble the ability of NCs to continue their positive work in their neighborhoods. Given that the City has already committed to paying for the \$550,000 cost of NC elections from its general fund, it should not now be looking for a backdoor way to pass on these costs to the NCs.

The Honorable Bernard C. Parks, Chair
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Neighborhood Councils play a vital role in keeping the City of Los Angeles vibrant and its citizens engaged with their government. Therefore, the Commission strongly urges the ENC and the City Council to support NCs in their work and reject the proposal to force NCs to pay for upcoming elections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Gatica', with a stylized flourish at the end. To the right of the signature, the letters 'FOR' are written in a similar hand.

Daniel Gatica, President
Board of Neighborhood Commissioners