

**MOTION**

*“Clean Money Elections for Los Angeles”*

The influence of money in our political system casts a long, heavy shadow over our democracy. Candidates are forced to spend inordinate amounts of time seeking out donors instead of voters, creating a widespread perception of influence peddling and corruption, undermining the electorate’s faith in candidates and elected officials, and discouraging voter participation.

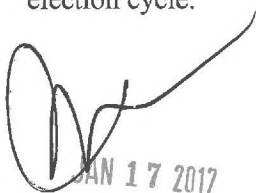
Los Angeles has a long and strong tradition of campaign finance reform. It has a robust public matching funds system, tight contribution limits, strong disclosure and transparency requirements, and a prohibition of donations from lobbyists and fundraising by city commissioners. Yet even Los Angeles’ strong system can be made stronger, increasing voter faith in the process.

In 2005, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl co-authored a motion (CF 05-1536) with then-Councilmembers Eric Garcetti and Wendy Greuel calling for a full public financing system for all elected offices in Los Angeles. That legislation was studied and debated, but no reforms were implemented and the Council File expired in 2011. Subsequent attempts were made to revive such a proposal with no success, often because of the potentially high cost of such a program and the anticipated impacts on the City’s General Fund and its competing priorities: public safety and essential city services.

The concept of “Clean Money,” as it has been called in jurisdictions such as Maine and Arizona, where such programs are in effect, is simple: a level playing field for all candidates is created through a voluntary public financing system. Candidates demonstrate viability by collecting a certain number of low-dollar donations from a large number of constituents, agree to forgo corporate donations, special interest money, further donations from other individuals, or significant self-financing, and in exchange receive a statutorily established amount of money sufficient to run an aggressive and well-financed campaign. Maine and Arizona both have successful versions of public financing that have: led to lowered overall campaign spending; freed candidates from fundraising; increased voter turnout; and encouraged more qualified people to run, including people of color and women.

Tremendous work has been done in recent years to educate the public about this issue, and to move toward a system of publicly-financed elections, including statewide efforts by organizations like “Money Out, Voters In” and the California Clean Money Campaign. The issue of money in elections at all levels of government was also a major theme in the presidential campaign of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, which ignited a movement of people throughout the country who want elections to be more fair and transparent.

With the demand to get money out of politics so strong, with the appetite for reform so prevalent, and with city elections scheduled to move to a new even-year cycle in 2020, the time has come to establish a “Clean Money” system of full public financing of Los Angeles municipal elections. Such a proposal should be submitted to the voters, with a dedicated revenue stream to fully pay for it, in the 2018 election cycle.



JAN 17 2017

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the City Council request that the City Ethics Commission consider and submit to City Council for potential voter approval in the 2018 election cycle a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System for all elected offices in the City of Los Angeles.

**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst work with the City Ethics Commission and staff to develop a cost estimate for a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System for all elected offices in the City of Los Angeles.

**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Council direct the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to report to the Council with potential dedicated funding streams for a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System that does not impact the General Fund. Specific funding sources to consider should include fees on development, and a severance tax for all oil and gas produced within the City of Los Angeles.

**PRESENTED BY:**



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**MIKE BONIN**

*Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District*

**SECONDED BY:**



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**ORIGINAL**