

N~~O~~Olympics LA

Members of City Council,

In May of 2017, as the International Olympic Committee was touring Los Angeles, NOlympics LA¹ launched its opposition to the 2024 bid. Since that time our coalition has grown to include dozens of community organizations including the Los Angeles Tenants Union, the Crenshaw Subway Coalition, Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) and Union De Vecinos.

Bid supporters claim that Angelenos are excited about the Olympic Games coming back to our city, pointing to a poll conducted by Loyola Marymount University saying 88% of people in Los Angeles support the games and an IOC poll citing 78% support.

NOlympics LA recently released the results of a survey that shows support for bringing the Olympics to LA in 2028 is not nearly as strong or as widespread as boosters have claimed, completely deflating the bid committee's claims of universal public support and highlighting the need for more robust and continuous polling on the Games.

NOlympics LA conducted an online survey (using SurveyMonkey's Audience service) of over 1,000 respondents across California, with 47% opposing the Games (25% strongly oppose), 27% neutral, and 26% supporting (only 9% strongly support). Within LA County the numbers are similar: 45% oppose the Games (25% strongly oppose), 24% are neutral, and 32% support (13% strongly support).

There were 16 questions in the survey, including multiple choice and one open response question. The margin of error is +/-3.1%. (For reference, the LMU survey from 2017 was +/-4%) The final question of the survey replicated the LMU poll and survey question, with two slight adjustments (explained below):

LMU question: How supportive are you of the City of Los Angeles hosting the Summer Olympic Games in 2028: strongly supportive, somewhat supportive, somewhat opposed, strongly opposed?

NOlympics LA: How supportive **or opposed*** are you of the City of Los Angeles hosting the Summer Olympic Games in 2028: strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, **neutral****, somewhat supportive, strongly supportive?

*Included "or opposed" in the question language, which is a common practice for Likert scale questions in order to avoid response bias.

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¹ <https://nolympicsla.com/>

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**Added a midpoint option of "neutral" to the scale, as scales without a midpoint create a forced choice for respondents and can present a false appearance of support or opposition, as neutral responses are lumped in with weak support or opposition.

The NOlympics survey also shows that the impact on housing and homelessness is a key concern among those who oppose hosting the Games, with 43% of respondents moderately or extremely concerned about the impact of the Olympics on the cost of housing, and 51% moderately or extremely concerned about the impact on LA's homelessness crisis.

"I think it'll drive cost of housing up by quite a bit and will displace a lot of people," wrote one survey respondent. "Los Angeles should focus on fixing the problems already there before adding more to the mix."

Our research indicates that the Olympic games will do more harm than good for Los Angeles, and cities all over the world agree as bids are becoming increasingly less popular and often defeated in public referenda. This survey demonstrates that public support for LA2028 is eroding when people are presented with the full scope of what an Olympic games means.

Outside of this new survey, there has only been one survey on the Los Angeles 2028 bid, conducted by Loyola Marymount University in August of 2017² and funded by the bid committee, the LA Area Chamber of Commerce and LMU. This survey claimed that 83% of Angelenos support the LA 2028 Olympic bid, but did not cite any of the potential negative impacts of the Games.

One poll is not an ample amount of research to conduct on an issue that will affect so many people's lives. We also believe the sole 2028 survey did not accurately or fairly assess strength of support or opposition. That's why we conducted our own survey and found that, above all, clearly more polling, surveys, and research must be done on these issues.

Here are links to the survey analysis (and data set) as well as selected open responses:

<https://nolympicsla.com/2018/10/09/survey-results-and-analysis/>

<https://nolympicsla.com/2018/10/09/heres-what-real-californians-think-of-the-la-2028-olympics/>

Most other cities going through an Olympic bid process receive months — if not years — of robust polling (from Calgary to Boston to many other cities). NOlympics LA acknowledges the massive defunding of local news media in Los Angeles, but they still insist academic institutions, journalistic outlets, and other groups with deeper resources should revisit this issue and conduct more rigorous polling on an event that is already shaping the future of the city.

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<https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1053551/public-poll-says-los-angeles-2028-has-83-per-cent-support>

Furthermore, we find the city's use of IOC funds to implement SwimLA to be emblematic of the way the Olympic games divert money, time and energy away from addressing systemic problems that plague the city and towards programs that serve to rehabilitate the image of one of the most scandal plagued, corrupt and unaccountable bodies in the world.

While we recognize that drownings are a leading cause of death for children aged 1-14³, we are also deeply disturbed by the fact that there are 63,000 homeless students attending schools in LA County⁴, a school system that is chronically underfunded and facing a looming teachers' strike⁵. Unfortunately, the money advanced by the IOC can only go to youth sports programs which will have no effect on ending this tragedy. Where do these children go after their swim lessons are over? How will they benefit from this program? What is being done to fix our public schools after decades of disinvestment and privatization?

These are questions that LA2028 will not, and indeed cannot, answer. Rather than spend 10 years preparing to "Welcome the World" and repair the broken Olympic Movement, we should be putting all of our resources towards fixing Los Angeles, housing our homeless population, and bracing ourselves for the climate catastrophe that threatens the viability of hosting the games at all.

Sincerely,

The NOlympics LA Coalition⁶

³ http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/EP/rw/rw_drowningPrevention.htm

⁴ <https://www.scpr.org/news/2017/01/25/68443/there-are-63-000-homeless-children-in-school-in-la/>

⁵ <https://www.utla.net/news/utla-members-vote-overwhelmingly-authorize-strike>

⁶ <https://nolympicsla.com/partners/>