

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(18) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 07/13/2017

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 07/13/2017

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 15-1088-S1

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council ("DLANC") should submit a Community Impact Statement in support of Council File 15-1088-S1. The proposals to increase matching fund rates and decrease maximum per-contribution limits could have a meaningful effect on political diversity and voter engagement. At the very least, the City should schedule Council File 15-1088-S1 for immediate consideration by the proper Committees and City Council. DLANC should submit the letter posted with this Agenda in support of the Community Impact Statement.

Attachments area



June 13, 2017

Council File 15-1088-S1

Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members,

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) requests that the following Community Impact Statement be added in support of Council File 15-1088-S1. As the most local level of City government, DLANC and other Neighborhood Councils are acutely aware of the difficulty of engaging and empowering voters on community issues. Moreover, the never-ending flood of outside money in municipal elections following the *Citizens United* decision¹ has undermined the responsiveness and accountability of local politicians to their voters. Candidates are forced to focus their campaigns—and ultimately their policies—on courting the most amount of money, irrespective of source or interest. After *Citizens United*, there simply is not much cities can do to rein in the corrosive effects of outside money in local elections. But this Council File represents a critical step in the right direction.

DLANC believes the proposals included in the Council File to increase matching public fund rates and decrease maximum per-contribution limits could have meaningful effect on local voter engagement and political diversity among candidates. As the Council is well-aware, these proposals have been under consideration for several years, and the City has taken various actions to experiment with matching fund rates and maximum per-contribution limits. The City’s own history with adjusting matching fund rates, as well as empirical evidence from New York, demonstrate the Council File would likely encourage voter turnout by incentivizing candidate engagement with smaller, predominantly local donors. With a more stable public funding source, the City would more effectively encourage depth and diversity in the candidate pool, which is often an issue in local elections—unlike Downtown’s recent experience with the CD-34 congressional primary and its nearly two dozen candidates.

While these proposals, on their own, might not radically transform our municipal campaign system, the Council File represents an important step to take. The proposals in this Council File could make a meaningful difference and, perhaps most importantly, demonstrate the City’s commitment to

creatively empowering voters and new candidates. At the very least, the City should schedule this Council File for immediate consideration by the proper Committees and City Council.

This Community Impact Statement is based on the recommendation of the Government Liaison Committee on April 19, 2017, and action taken at the Board of Directors meeting on June 13, 2017, when the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council adopted the following motion and directed that a Community Impact Statement be filed reflecting its position.

Motion: “The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) should submit a Community Impact Statement in support of Council File 15-1088-S1. The proposals to increase matching fund rates and decrease maximum per-contribution limits could have a meaningful effect on political diversity and voter engagement. At the very least, the City should schedule Council File 15-1088-S1 for immediate consideration by the proper Committees and City Council. DLANC should submit the letter posted with this Agenda in support of the Community Impact Statement.”

Sincerely,



Patricia Berman
DLANC President

Sincerely,



Nate Johnson
DLANC Government Liaison Committee Chair