

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Coalition Letter  
**Date Submitted:** 10/29/2021 12:55 PM  
**Council File No:** 20-0668  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Support for LACCRC recommendations re: council expansion and independent redistricting Citizens Take Action East Valley Indivisibles Feminists in Action Los Angeles Ground Game LA Ktown for All People's City Council NoHo Home Alliance Northridge Indivisible The Valley of Change Unrig LA West Valley People's Alliance White People 4 Black Lives

Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring St. Room 275  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

October 29, 2021

RE: LACCRC Report - Support for Council Expansion & Independent Redistricting

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

We are writing in support of the charter reforms recommended in the Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission's draft report. These proposals reflect a reality with which our city must come to terms. We will not be able to offer anything resembling the kind of "fair and inclusive representation" this commission aspired to deliver until the City of LA increases the membership of our City Council and ensures that future district lines will be drawn by a fully independent commission.

Moving to a truly independent redistricting commission is long overdue, but without a larger City Council an independent commission would face nearly all of the same inherent limits that challenged this commission. During last week's final vote, Commissioner Prichard stated, "I think one big issue is that we have faced the structural constraint of only 15 council districts to represent this incredibly large, diverse, and geographically vast region and we have done the best that we can do." The LA Times Editorial Board recently described the small number of districts as rendering redistricting in LA to be "an impossible job."<sup>1</sup> While there will always be tough decisions involved in the redistricting process, a larger number of districts will allow more neighborhoods to remain intact, increase the ability to tailor districts to natural communities of interest, and force fewer tradeoffs between the often competing interests of different voters and communities. With more districts it will be easier to incorporate the input of LA's many stakeholders, while still having the flexibility to maintain a general consensus. Creating new opportunities for representation for one district would not require the dramatic relocation of another council district across the city.

Just as a limited number of council districts inhibited this commission's work, our massive districts also leave our councilmembers with a similarly "impossible job." Expansion of City Council will allow Los Angeles to elect a government that is more representative of our city's diversity and more responsive to its people. The job of an LA City Councilmember has evolved dramatically since 1925, yet we still operate under a council sized for a city that had barely begun to sprawl and had yet to construct its first freeway or airport. Right-sizing our city council gives our leaders a realistic ability to handle core functions like delivering constituent services and the capacity to navigate the intensive work required to build permanent supportive housing.

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<sup>1</sup> LA Times Editorial: In Los Angeles, political meddling poisons redistricting.  
<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-10-25/los-angeles-city-redistricting>

Trust in LA City Hall has been deeply undermined over the last three years, and our large unwieldy districts have helped reinforce a culture of corruption. Putting the responsibility for governing so many people in so few hands creates an extreme concentration of power and reinforces incumbency protection. Large districts lead to expensive campaigns, meaning that incumbents in this city rarely face a formidable challenger, let alone a runoff. Council expansion would lower the barriers to entry for challengers and ensure that a greater diversity of voices are heard through the electoral process.

We cannot afford to wait until 2031 to finally provide a fully representative government to Los Angeles. Our charter allows for the city to redistrict more frequently than every 10 years,<sup>2</sup> and it may indeed be ideal for the city to redraw the lines with the insight gained from the Census Bureau’s post-enumeration survey which will be available next year.

Redistricting may never be pretty, but it can certainly be a less divisive process and produce a better government. The Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission has the clearest view of anyone in the city as to how these factors stymied our year-long redistricting effort. A return to this conversation is certainly warranted and we thank this commission for helping initiate it. A particular thanks is owed to Commissioner Sonja Diaz for compiling a detailed analysis of council expansion.<sup>3</sup> *We ask the commissioners to support the report’s recommendations on charter reform and ask any commissioners considering voting against the commission report to state their support for these particular recommendations.*

Sincerely,

Citizens Take Action

NoHo Home Alliance

East Valley Indivisibles

Northridge Indivisible

Feminists in Action Los Angeles

The Valley of Change

Ground Game LA

Unrig LA

Ktown for All

West Valley People's Alliance

People’s City Council

White People 4 Black Lives

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<sup>2</sup> Charter Sec. 204(c): “...Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Council from redistricting with greater frequency provided that districts so formed each contain, as nearly as practicable, equal portions of the total population of the City as shown by the Federal Census immediately preceding the formation of districts or based upon other population reports or estimates determined by Council to be substantially reliable.”

[https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los\\_angeles/latest/laac/0-0-0-406](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/laac/0-0-0-406)

<sup>3</sup> Draft Final Report of the 2021 LA City Council Redistricting Commission. Appendix M: Report on Expansion of City Council.

<https://laccrc2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Final-Report-Draft-10.26.pdf>

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Brandon in CD4  
**Date Submitted:** 10/29/2021 01:26 AM  
**Council File No:** 20-0668

**Comments for Public Posting:** To whom it may concern, I'm a native angeleno and a longtime resident of CD4. Over the past decade, I've seen changes in my neighborhood that have made the presence of its city council leadership more important than ever. In particular, having a city council member who shows up for his/her/their constituents has become critical, in the face of external players seeking to displace long established communities for the sake of short term profits. After the last election, I was skeptical that our new council member's office would effectively take up the mantel of advocacy for tenants rights to the degree that her predecessor had — within the local community, David Ryu was famous for championing the causes of his constituents. However, as my neighbors and I have sought help in dealing with a predatory landlord in recent months, I've been both surprised and extremely grateful for the personal attention, consistent communication, follow up, and follow through from council member Raman's office in helping us navigate the often turbulent straights that come with being a tenant in the city during the current market cycle. With all that said, I can't stress enough the importance of allowing us to keep our current city council representation as the city debates redistricting. Beyond the potential disruption in addressing constituent issues that a change in representation could present, the voters of CD4 chose its current leadership through a democratic process. To reassign representation without the express permission of those voters would undermine the integrity and meaning of that process.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** frank Bowen

**Date Submitted:** 10/20/2021 03:26 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0668

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am against the proposal to split woodlandhills into two districts and remove Warner center and Pierce college. Woodland Hills has been under represented in the city council has been remiss in addressing the issues of this area. The community needs to be represented as a whole and the representative needs to be able to address all elements within the district.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Madeline Brozen

**Date Submitted:** 10/29/2021 04:35 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0668

**Comments for Public Posting:** We are writing in support of the charter reforms recommended in the Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission's draft report, specifically around expanding the current number of districts. During the most recent redistricting process, and during the previous redistricting process in 2010, these commissions labored incredibly to try and maintain representation across 15 single-member districts. In the multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and socioeconomically diverse City of Los Angeles, it has become increasingly impossible for these commissions to create a set of representative districts within the current number. As highlighted by Vice-Chair Diaz in Appendix M of the commission's final report, the number of council districts in the city has remained the same size for nearly a century, even as the population of the city has increased by 576%. The City of Los Angeles has the largest city council districts of any city in the United States that elected a council by districts. This configuration dilutes citizen representation and has the risk of disenfranchising any group that is too small to not dominate a large district of over a quarter-million people. We join in support of other groups that are advocating for an increase in the number of districts. By expanding the size of council, this change can ensure that future redistricting commissions are not starting from a major disadvantage to try and create fair, inclusive, and representative districts due to the current number of districts. Very few of the rules and regulations governing the City of Los Angeles have gone unchanged for one hundred years and therefore, it is far past time for the Los Angeles City Council to take up the issue of increasing the number of districts in the city. Commissioner Diaz was not alone in her suggestions to increase the number of districts in the City. During last week's final vote, Commissioner Prichard stated, "I think one big issue is that we have faced the structural constraint of only 15 council districts to represent this incredibly large, diverse, and geographically vast region and we have done the best that we can do." Increasing the number of districts in the council is in alignment with other voter-approved changes in Los Angeles local governance such as the change to move municipal elections in line with the federal election cycle. This one change represented a massive shift in participation of the local electorate in municipal elections and voting increasing by

400%, even though voter registration between 2015 and 2020 increased by 14%. This shift signals the demand of residents to be increasingly engaged with local politics and issues that affect their everyday lives in the City of Los Angeles. We support the council considering the critical issue of the size of the council before the next redistricting process in 2031. The city charter allows for the city to redistrict more frequently than every 10 years, and it may indeed be ideal to decouple the discussion of the number of districts from the process of drawing the lines themselves. With a new number of council districts in place, the next redistricting commission (meeting in 2031 or before) can start from a place of having more districts from which to draw representative boundaries. We want to offer our thanks and gratitude to Commissioner Sonja Diaz for compiling a detailed analysis of council expansion. As we work to ensure that the region can address issues facing residents every day lives, a particularly promising opportunity to do so in the City of Los Angeles is to increase the size of council and representation. We ask the commissioners to support the report's recommendations on charter reform, namely around increasing the number of districts in council. Comments on behalf of: Evelyn Blumenerg, Director Madeline Brozen, Deputy Director Paavo Monkkonen, Associate Faculty Director UCLA Lewis Center Regional Policy Studies Note: This comment is intended to offer recommendations for increasing representation in the City of Los Angeles as individuals working within the mission of the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. It is not intended to represent the official views of the Center, the University of California, Los Angeles nor the UC Board of Regents.

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We join in support of other groups that are advocating for an increase in the number of districts. By expanding the size of council, this change can ensure that future redistricting commissions are not starting from a major disadvantage to try and create fair, inclusive, and representative districts due to the current number of districts. Very few of the rules and regulations governing the City of Los Angeles have gone unchanged for one hundred years and therefore, it is far past time for the Los Angeles City Council to take up the issue of increasing the number of districts in the city.

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Sincerely,

Evelyn Blumenerg, Director  
Madeline Brozen, Deputy Director  
Paavo Monkkonen, Associate Faculty Director  
UCLA Lewis Center Regional Policy Studies

*Note: This letter is intended to offer recommendations for increasing representation in the City of Los Angeles as individuals working within the mission of the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. It is not intended to represent the official views of the Center, the University of California, Los Angeles nor the UC Board of Regents.*

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