

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(10) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 10/10/2022

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 10/18/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 22-1196

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: See attached

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Mike Freuer, Los Angeles City Attorney
Honorable Members of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners
Honorable Members of the Commission on Civil Rights
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Honorable Members of the City's Ethics Commission

**RE: November 2022 Ballot / Ballot Measure / City Charter Amendment / Independent
Redistricting Commission
CF 21-1472 (For if amended)**

**Heather Hutt / Office Holder Appointment / Council District 10
CF 22-0981 (Against)**

**Temporary Appointment / Eligibility Requirements / Council District 10
CF 22-0987 (For)**

**October 2022 Council Sessions / Public Comment / Communications(s) from Public
CF 22-0000-S10**

**Office of Racial Equity / Establish / City Policy / Programs
CF 19-1470 (For)**

The Mid-City Neighborhood Council calls on Councilmembers Martinez, de León, and Cedillo to immediately resign from the Los Angeles City Council. As widely reported by the [LA Times](#) and [Knock LA](#), all three councilmembers engaged in an abhorrent conversation that disparaged and disrespected Councilmember Mike Bonin and his family, other City Councilmembers, the Black community, the redistricting process, and Angelenos everywhere. These three councilmembers should take ownership of their vile and inexcusable actions and immediately resign. While resignation will not begin to repair the damage that has been done to our City, it is the first step

in showing true accountability and remorse. Los Angeles cannot begin to heal while these three remain in power.

In the event these three councilmembers fail to see the urgency of the need for their resignations, the City Council itself has a duty to act. The City Council must agendize a censure of Councilmembers Martinez, de León and Cedillo, if they fail to resign. Martinez, Cedillo, and de León are not fit to lead the City Council as evidenced by their widely reported, racist, homophobic, classist, defamatory, disempowering comments and concurrent actions consistent with these comments during the redistricting process and the Council District 10 vacancy. Neighborhood council leaders expect a unanimous vote on these censures. Anything less is tantamount to an endorsement of anti-Black racism, violence against children, homophobia, and gerrymandering and power brokering in backroom deals in violation of the Brown Act.

Make no mistake. The current situation is not merely a matter of some errant words spoken in frustration and taken out of context. Instead, the portions of the recording already released are evidence of intentional violation of the law during the redistricting process. Specifically, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act requires that redistricting changes can be proven to not have a discriminatory purpose or effect. In the recording released and commented on by the LA Times, we see clear evidence of an overt discriminatory purpose in redistricting proposals which were subsequently adopted. This opens up the city to liability and makes urgent the need for a truly independent redistricting commission.

There were multiple examples of discrimination on display that day. Councilmember de León compared an adopted Black child to a luxury handbag. Councilmember Martinez disparaged the Indigenous Oaxacan community in Koreatown saying “I see a lot of little short dark people,” employing stereotypes long used against Oaxacans (Indigenous people) in Mexico and in the United States. “I was like, I don’t know where these people are from, I don’t know what village they came [from], how they got here,” Martinez said, before adding “Tan feos” - (They’re so ugly). Councilmember Martinez called Councilmember Bonin’s son a “changito - (little monkey)” and expressed that “this kid needs a beat down” regarding the toddler’s excitement at participating in an MLK Day parade. Throughout the released recordings, there is a deep vein of anti-Black racism that pervades all aspects of the discussion on redistricting. Homophobia is also on display, with CM Martinez calling Councilmember Bonin “a little bitch” and Councilmember O’Farrell a “diva”.

Neighborhood Councilmembers once again call attention to the unusual circumstances in Council District 10. The choice by CM Nury Martinez to appoint Herb Wesson, who was clearly barred from holding the seat by the City charter, exposed the City to liability and disenfranchised the residents of Council District 10 - all in pursuit of her own power. When community members and Councilmembers called out the swift appointment of Heather Hutt as a backroom deal or puzzling they were accused by CM Martinez of not wanting to see a Black woman in power. We know now that this appointment was the result of power brokering whose purpose was to benefit CM Martinez, not the stakeholders of Council District 10. That CM Martinez would wield identity politics to create divisive chaos in Council District 10 to hide her backroom deals is fiducially, morally, and ethically reprehensible. This is not the leadership that Angelenos deserve. The appointment of Heather Hutt to represent Council District 10 needs to be immediately

investigated as there is the impression of impropriety surrounding the action, this is especially important since the seat was originally vacated due to alleged corruption.

The behavior evidenced by Nury Martinez, Kevin de León, and Gil Cedillo would never be tolerated at the Neighborhood Council level. Neighborhood Council members are required to both adhere to a Code Conduct and take Anti Bias training as part of our service. We believe the City Councilmembers should lead with their behavior rather than becoming a national mockery. The rules around our decorum and training are clear. Equally clear is the double standard that exists for members of the City Council. Were Neighborhood Council members to behave in a similar manner, we would face censure, removal and dismissal by our own board, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners. Indeed, elected officials have been removed from Neighborhood Councils for far less egregious violations than what we are sickened to have listened to here.

CM Martinez has also limited public comment at City Hall in a way that has never been seen before and which would never be tolerated by Neighborhood Councils or the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. She frequently takes the bare minimum of comment allowable under the Brown Act, even when an issue is contentious or important. Her dismissive and contemptuous attitude towards the public has radiated into the Council during her tenure as President, creating an environment where casual racism is accepted without question and systematic racism can flourish. An example of this is when a Black man disrupted the August 10th, 2022 City Council meeting by merely shouting, Councilmember Buscaino flippantly threatened to call DCFs on the man to remove his newborn child.

This contempt for public comment also affects Neighborhood Councils. In a Community Impact Statement Townhall earlier this year, Councilmember Martinez promised the Neighborhood Council system a continuation of telephonic comment so that we could share our community impact statements. However, this promise was never fulfilled and in-person comment returned with no notice or consideration for Neighborhood Council volunteers. We believe this choice speaks deeply to the contempt that Councilmember Martinez has for the public as evidenced by her shocking statements.

The Mid-City Neighborhood Council also believes that many of these conversations may also be evidence of violations of the Brown Act. Both redistricting and the Council District 10 appointment were matters that were agendized in Council, but it is clear that these decisions were being made prior to open and observable Council meetings. Given that it has been reported that there is over an hour of disgusting rhetoric, Neighborhood Councils therefore wonder what other topics may have been discussed not only that day, but in any other secret meetings.

In 2022, we don't expect to hear explicit recordings of literal, systemic racism, recordings of the leaders of City Hall participating in homophobic, racist, and anti-Black rhetoric while discussing gerrymandering on the basis of race and socioeconomic status and backroom deals to keep themselves in power.

To Councilpersons Martinez, de León, and Cedillo, resign immediately so the city can begin healing.

To Eric Garcetti and Mike Feuer we implore that you refer the matters of Los Angeles City Redistricting and the Appointment of Heather Hutt to represent Council District 10 to the FBI for investigation into corruption.

To Councilpersons Krekorian, Blumenfield, Raman, Koretz, Rodriguez, Harris-Dawson, Price, Hutt, Bonin, Lee, O'Farrell, and Buscaino, we call on you to immediately agendize a censure motion for councilpersons Martinez, de León, and Cedillo.

It is your duty, on behalf of Angelenos, to stand up to racism, homophobia, and corruption and say this is not how The City of Los Angeles operates and there is no tolerance for such acts. The world is watching you, be the leaders Los Angeles needs.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Mid City Neighborhood Council

CC: Rob Banta, California Attorney General
Dr. Shirley Weber, California Secretary of State

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Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council
Honorable Members of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners

RE: November 2022 Ballot / Ballot Measure / City Charter Amendment / Independent Redistricting Commission

Council File 21-1472

The Mid-City Neighborhood Council supports the creation of an independent redistricting commission. It is a necessary and overdue step for the City Council and Los Angeles Unified School Board Districts. During the 2021 redistricting process, Neighborhood Councils had to expend a great deal of energy and time to fight for our neighborhoods in what was clearly a polarized and politicized process. It is time for the City to align with the County and the State and have an independent redistricting commission.

Should the voters pass this ballot measure as proposed, the City Council should immediately initiate the redistricting process.

Furthermore, we strongly believe that the City Council size needs to be expanded. It is simply not possible for 15 council members to govern 4 million people. Each City Council person is supposed to represent over a quarter million residents. For comparison, in New York City (8.4 million people, 51 council districts), each council district represents approximately 160,000-170,000 people. In Chicago (2.71 million people, 50 wards), each alderman represents approximately 54,000 people. The City Council districts are simply too large to govern each area well and have created an environment rife with opportunity for corruption by concentrating so much power in so few hands as evidenced by a fifth of our council coming under indictment in the last decade.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,
Mid City Neighborhood Council