

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

Neighborhood Council: Voices of 90037

Name: Dulce Vasquez

Phone Number:

Email: vicechair@voicesnc.org

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

Date of NC Board Action: 11/08/2022

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 11/16/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 22-1232

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Voices Neighborhood Council on November 8, 2022 voted 10-0 to SUPPORT, City Council File 22-1232 to amend the city charter around the powers and responsibilities of the Ethics Commission and send the amendments to voters in 2024. The Voices Neighborhood Council supports the recommended changes to the charter if amended. Our city's ethics commission was a model for the nation when it was created over three decades ago, and an update is overdue. We urge the city to do the work necessary to finalize a proposal for a future ballot. The Ethics Commissions recommendations would largely reflect input received on how to empower the body to enforce the law, meaningfully change policy, and would change power dynamics at city hall. However, they fail to equally enhance the independence of the commission. This could give rise to elected officials influencing commissioners and meddling with the enforcement actions and policy proposals they carry out.



VOICES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL General Board



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11/08/22

RE: [Council File: 22-1232](#)

Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr.
4301 S. Central Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Via Email

Dear Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr.,

The Voices Neighborhood Council on November 8, 2022 voted 10-0 to SUPPORT, City Council File 22-1232 to amend the city charter around the powers and responsibilities of the Ethics Commission and send the amendments to voters in 2024.

The Voices Neighborhood Council supports the recommended changes to the charter if amended. Our city's ethics commission was a model for the nation when it was created over three decades ago, and an update is overdue. We urge the city to do the work necessary to finalize a proposal for a future ballot.

The Ethics Commissions recommendations would largely reflect input received on how to empower the body to enforce the law, meaningfully change policy, and would change power dynamics at city hall. However, they fail to equally enhance the independence of the commission. This could give rise to elected officials influencing commissioners and meddling with the enforcement actions and policy proposals they carry out.

We recommend the following specific amendments:

- **Independent Appointment:** The city of LA will not have a truly independent ethics commission until it ends the involvement of elected officials in the appointment process. The incumbent commissioners should be responsible for accepting and vetting applications through a public process like the Oakland and Long Beach Ethics Commissions.
- **Raise the vote threshold for removal of a commissioner:** The commission recommends increasing the number of elected officials who may initiate removal and reducing the threshold to a majority vote. We recommend requiring a 2/3rds vote for all removal proceedings of ethics commissioners.
- **Raise minimum budget:** The commission recommends their budget be set at \$4.5 million and tied to CPI. While this would protect against retaliation or defunding during a financial crunch, this essentially freezes the status quo into the charter. \$4.5 million is a few hundred

thousand above the commission's current budget. The recommendations include new expenditures, like outside counsel, which will require more money. If the Council is expanded, ethics will require more money. A minimum budget in the range of \$7-10 million– or a percentage tied to the overall council staffing budget in case council gets expanded at some point– would give the commission the resources needed to fulfill its broad sweeping mandate.

These reforms would ensure the commission is sufficiently independent enough to be entrusted with the expanded power offered.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and appreciate your commitment to strengthen our community.

Sincerely,

Dulce Vasquez
Vice Chair
vicechair@voicesnc.org

CC: Kendal Lake, Field Deputy for CD9