



clerk CIS <clerk.cis@lacity.org>

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## Community Impact Statement - Submission Details

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LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>  
Reply-To: LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>  
To: Clerk.CIS@lacity.org

Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 2:02 PM

A Neighborhood Council Community Impact Statement (CIS) has been successfully submitted to your Commission or City Council. We provided information below about CISs and attached a copy of the CIS.

We encourage you to reach out to the Community Impact Statement Filer to acknowledge receipt and if this Community Impact Statement will be scheduled at a future meeting. Neighborhood Council board members are volunteers and it would be helpful if they received confirmation that you received their CIS.

The CIS process was enabled by the Los Angeles Administrative Code §Section 22.819. It provides that, "a Neighborhood Council may take a formal position on a matter by way of a Community Impact Statement (CIS) or written resolution." NCs representatives also testify before City Boards and Commissions on the item related to their CIS. If the Neighborhood Council chooses to do so, the Neighborhood Council representative must provide the Commission with a copy of the CIS or resolution sufficiently in advance for review, possible inclusion on the agenda, and posting on the Commission's website. Any information you can provide related to your agenda setting schedule is helpful to share with the NC.

If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *listed on the Commission's agenda*, during the time the matter is heard, the designated Neighborhood Council representative should be given an opportunity to present the Neighborhood Council's formal position. We encourage becoming familiar with the City Council's rules on the subject. At the Chair's discretion, the Neighborhood Council representative may be asked to have a seat at the table (or equivalent for a virtual meeting) typically reserved for City staff and may provide the Neighborhood Council representative more time than allotted to members of the general public. They are also permitted up to five (5) minutes of time to address the legislative body. If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *not listed on the agenda*, the designated Neighborhood Council representative may speak during General Public Comments.

We share this information to assist you with the docketing neighborhood council items before your board/commission. If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at [empowerla@lacity.org](mailto:empowerla@lacity.org).

\*\*\*\*\* This is an automated response, please DO NOT reply to this email. \*\*\*\*\*

### Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park  
Name: Theresa Saso  
Email: [theresa.saso@highlandparknc.com](mailto:theresa.saso@highlandparknc.com)  
The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(12) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)  
Date of NC Board Action: 06/01/2023  
Type of NC Board Action: For

### Impact Information

Date: 06/05/2023  
Update to a Previous Input: No  
Directed To: City Council and Committees  
Council File Number: 23-0359  
Agenda Date:  
Item Number:

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council (HHPNC), representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports this Motion, and the effort to direct the City's Chief Legislative Analyst, in consultation with the Ethics Commission, to report back on the feasibility of establishing a democracy vouchers program, including options to achieve full public financing of campaigns, in Los Angeles City. **\*\*PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PDF FOR FULL COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT\*\***

Ref:MSG8443050

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**CF23-0359 HHPNC CIS .pdf**  
909K

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
Post Office Box 50791 Los Angeles, CA 90050  
<http://www.highlandparknc.com>  
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT  
200 N. Spring St. Ste. 2005 Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Telephone: (213) 978-1551

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**Arts Ad Hoc** Ramona Joy Mikelson

**HHPNC Ad Hoc Committee on the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan** Clara Solis, Rick Marquez

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# HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

June 1, 2023

Attn: Los Angeles City Council Members

From: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

RE: Council File [23-0359](#), Explore the feasibility of Democracy Vouchers, enabling campaigning equity.

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council (HHPNC), representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports this [Motion](#), [Exhibit 1], and the effort to direct the City's Chief Legislative Analyst, in consultation with the Ethics Commission, to report back on the feasibility of establishing a democracy vouchers program, including options to achieve full public financing of campaigns, in Los Angeles City.

A democracy vouchers program has the potential to address the issue of underrepresentation of low-income Angelenos and communities of color in the campaign finance system. By providing vouchers to residents, regardless of their income or background, this program enables them to financially support local campaigns and candidates.

Seattle's democracy vouchers program, implemented in 2015, has shown promising results in terms of increasing diversity and participation. The expanded donor pool in Seattle reflects the demographic makeup of voters, including age, income, and race. This means that candidates have access to a more diverse range of supporters, making the candidate pool itself more representative of the electorate.

Furthermore, democracy vouchers have the potential to engage and empower low-propensity voters who might otherwise feel disengaged from the political process. By giving them a tangible way to contribute to campaigns, these vouchers can encourage increased civic participation among traditionally marginalized groups.

By creating a campaign finance system that is more inclusive and accessible, Los Angeles can work towards a more equitable democracy, where all residents have an equal opportunity to contribute to the political process and shape the future of their city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Blumsack', written in a cursive style.

Charles Blumsack

President

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

[Exhibit 1]

## MOTION

RULES, ELECTIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The 2020 City election in Los Angeles was one of the most expensive in City history. All told, \$32 million was spent to influence who gets to represent the City's diverse communities, including \$10.4 million in campaign spending and \$22 million in independent expenditures. The vast majority of itemized contributions came from actors who are not representative of the City's racial and socioeconomic demographics. According to an April 2022 report from LA for Democracy Vouchers,<sup>1</sup> just 49.8% of dollars contributed to the 2020 races came from people who live in Los Angeles or from the City's matching funds program. The remainder of the money—a majority of all dollars contributed—came from special interest groups, or from people who do not live in the City of Los Angeles. What's more, even when campaign money does come from within the City, it comes disproportionately from wealthy and white neighborhoods. Majority white ZIP codes gave 2.6 times as much per person as ZIP codes with majority people of color. This data highlights the extent to which communities of color and low-income communities in Los Angeles are left out of the campaign financing process, often because they cannot afford to make a contribution. A recent updated report on the 2022 election showed that campaign donations overwhelmingly came once again from a few wealthy donors, people outside Los Angeles, and wealthier, whiter neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, the City has a matching fund program which matches contributions up to \$129 at a six-to-one ratio. While this program has helped more candidates run, it has not addressed the immense racial and socioeconomic disparities in the donor pool. Matching funds do not change the reality that many Angelenos do not have disposable income to spend on campaign donations.

To diversify the donor pool, other cities have instituted "Democracy Vouchers" programs. Democracy Vouchers provide an opportunity for more representative decision-making by allowing all residents to engage in a city's political process, regardless of their income. Under such a program, every voting-age adult receives a set number of vouchers which they can donate to candidates of their choosing, who can then redeem the vouchers with the city for money to fund their campaigns. The experience of other cities has shown that when a more diverse group of people is able to contribute to campaigns, a more diverse set of candidates from non-traditional backgrounds run for public office. A similar program has been in place in Seattle, Washington since 2015, and the results are promising. Donors have become more diverse by race, income, and age, engagement among low-propensity voters has increased, and the city had its most diverse mayoral field ever in 2021. In December 2022, voters in Oakland, CA, also overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure to implement a "democracy dollars" program.

As one of the most diverse cities in the country, the City of Los Angeles has a duty to ensure all Angelenos are able to participate in policy decisions that profoundly impact their everyday lives. By using Democracy Vouchers to make campaign financing accessible to all, the City can boost political engagement, diversify the donor pool, and ensure that candidates and officeholders are more representative of the electorate.



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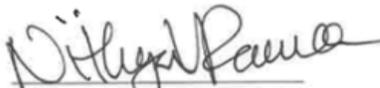
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lademocracyvouchers.org/content/files/2022/04/Elevating-More-Voices-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lademocracyvouchers.org/content/files/2023/03/Empowering-Los-Angeles-Report.pdf>

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the City Council instruct the Chief Legislative Analyst, in consultation with the Ethics Commission and relevant City departments, as needed, to report back within 90 days on the feasibility of establishing a Democracy Vouchers program in the City of Los Angeles. The report should include:

- A demographic and neighborhood-by-neighborhood analysis of donors in City of Los Angeles elections;
- An analysis of the effectiveness of Democracy Vouchers programs in other cities, such as Seattle; and
- Recommendations for the establishment of a Democracy Vouchers program in the City of Los Angeles, taking into account:
  - The degree to which a Democracy Vouchers program would increase the share of campaign money coming from within the City of Los Angeles;
  - The degree to which a Democracy Vouchers program would increase the share of campaign money coming from people, as opposed to special interest groups;
  - The degree to which a Democracy Vouchers program would make campaign financing more equitable by boosting donations from ZIP codes in Los Angeles with a high percentage of people of color;
  - The possibility of creating a hybrid public financing program based upon Democracy Vouchers where raising a certain amount of funds through Democracy Vouchers could result in the award of a grant, or multiple grants, to achieve full public financing, similar to the gubernatorial races in Arizona, Massachusetts and Maine;
  - Whether a Democracy Vouchers program would diversify the demographics of candidates for public office in Los Angeles;
  - Whether a Democracy Vouchers program would boost political engagement within Los Angeles;
  - Range of options for candidate requirements, including but not limited to public debate requirements, contribution and spending limits, and disclosure agreements;
  - Safeguards to prevent potential fraud and abuse;
  - Staffing requirements;
  - Appropriate budget size and funding options for successful implementation; and
  - How a Democracy Vouchers program should work with the City's current matching funds program.

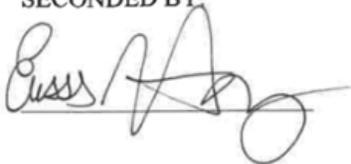
PRESENTED BY:

  
NITHYA RAMAN  
Councilmember, 4th District

  
HUGO SOTO-MARTÍNEZ  
Councilmember, 13th District

  
MARQUEECE  
HARRIS-DAWSON  
Councilmember, 8th District

SECONDED BY:







ORIGINAL