

Communication from Public

Name: Nancy Yap

Date Submitted: 08/09/2023 07:35 AM

Council File No: 22-1196-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council President Krekorian and Councilmembers, The Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE) is writing to express our support for reforms to the City Charter that would 1) increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts and 2) create an independent redistricting commission. CAUSE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization with a mission to advance the political and civic empowerment of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community through nonpartisan voter outreach, training, and education as well as leadership development. We urge you to support two significant reforms to the Charter that would strengthen the City Council's ability to meaningfully represent AAPI communities and address our needs: Increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts without dividing Asian communities of interest. The current 15 single-member district Council does not adequately serve our communities. Initial modeling suggests that staying at 15 districts would make it almost impossible for AAPI voice to exceed 30% of any single district and more likely than not that the largest AAPI population in any given district would remain under 25%. In a recent multiethnic statewide poll conducted by CAUSE in collaboration with Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, Los Angeles Urban League, and the Los Angeles Times, Asian Americans most strongly support increasing the size of the Los Angeles City Council (67%) and is closely followed by African Americans (64%), Latinos (62%), and White (62%). In this same poll, 46% of Asian Americans feel not well represented by elected and appointed Los Angeles City government leaders, which is much higher than other ethnic groups. Create an independent redistricting commission (IRC) that reflects, and meaningfully engages with, the diverse communities of the city, including AAPIs. AAPIs strongly support the creation of an IRC and believe it will lead to better representation of our communities. Critically, the IRC, as a public body managing a public process requiring public input, should be inclusive of and accessible to our community members. Asian Americans are the most likely to speak a language other than English at home, have the highest levels of language assistance needs, and experience the highest levels of linguistic isolation.

Meaningful engagement of our communities means public education and outreach resources should be provided, and public meetings should be conducted, in multiple languages, such as Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Thai, Hindi, Khmer, Japanese, Samoan, and Tongan. We strongly urge the Ad Hoc Committee on City Governance Reform to increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts without dividing Asian communities of interest and create an independent redistricting commission to help restore the confidence of our communities in local government. Sincerely, Nancy Yap
Executive Director

Chair

Charlie Woo
Megatoys

Vice Chair

Adam Ma
Political Consultant

Legal Counsel

James Hsu
Squire Patton Boggs

Secretary

Ben Wong
Public Affairs Consultant

Treasurer

Wen Hong
Pacific Rim Advisory Council

Gary H. Arakawa

Covington Capital Management

Ralph Barnes

Consultant

Tami Bui

Turo

Wendy Greuel

Los Angeles Homeless Services
Authority

Victor King

California State University,
Los Angeles

Dan Schnur

University of Southern California

Tammy Tran

Southern California Edison

Robert Yap

Gen Mobile

CAUSE STAFF

Nancy Yap

Executive Director

Steve Lin

Director of Programs

Justine Ventura-Mejia

Programs Manager

Farrah Su

Marketing & Communications
Manager



August 8, 2023

Los Angeles City Council
Ad Hoc Committee on City Governance Reform
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File #22-1196-S1

Dear Council President Krekorian and Councilmembers,

The Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE) is writing to express our support for reforms to the City Charter that would 1) increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts and 2) create an independent redistricting commission. CAUSE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization with a mission to advance the political and civic empowerment of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community through nonpartisan voter outreach, training, and education as well as leadership development.

We urge you to support two significant reforms to the Charter that would strengthen the City Council's ability to meaningfully represent AAPI communities and address our needs:

- 1) Increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts without dividing Asian communities of interest. The current 15 single-member district Council does not adequately serve our communities. Initial modeling suggests that staying at 15 districts would make it almost impossible for AAPI voice to exceed 30% of any single district and more likely than not that the largest AAPI population in any given district would remain under 25%.

In a recent multiethnic statewide poll conducted by CAUSE in collaboration with Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, Los Angeles Urban League, and the Los Angeles Times, Asian Americans most strongly support increasing the size of the Los Angeles City Council (67%) and is closely followed by African Americans (64%), Latinos (62%), and White (62%). In this same poll, 46% of Asian Americans feel not well represented by elected and appointed Los Angeles City government leaders, which is much higher than other ethnic groups.

- 2) Create an independent redistricting commission (IRC) that reflects, and meaningfully engages with, the diverse communities of the city, including AAPIs. AAPIs strongly support the creation of an IRC and believe it will lead to better representation of our communities. Critically, the IRC, as a public body managing a public process requiring public input, should be inclusive of and accessible to our community members.

Asian Americans are the most likely to speak a language other than English at home, have the highest levels of language assistance needs, and experience the highest levels of linguistic isolation. Meaningful engagement of our communities means public education and outreach resources should be provided, and public meetings should be conducted, in multiple languages, such as Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Thai, Hindi, Khmer, Japanese, Samoan, and Tongan.

We strongly urge the Ad Hoc Committee on City Governance Reform to increase the size of the City Council from 15 to 23-31 single-member districts without dividing Asian communities of interest and create an independent redistricting commission to help restore the confidence of our communities in local government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Yap", written in a cursive style.

Nancy Yap
Executive Director