

TO: Rules and Elections Committee

Fr: Hon. Jan C. Perry (Ret.)

Date: July 7, 2020

Re: Statement for Rules and Elections Committee on Tuesday, June 30, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the Rules and the Elections Committee on Tuesday, June 30, 2020. I'm former Councilwoman Jan Perry and I served on the Los Angeles City Council from 2001 to 2013. Item number (1), the Chief Legislative Analyst report regarding the 2012 redistricting process, tells a cautionary tale.

There was a basic design flaw in the City's modeling for 2012 because Commissioners at the time were not independent from the elected officials who appointed them. Also, there was no rule requiring communications or third-party exchanges involving Commissioners to be documented on the public record. In fact, I made a motion to adopt such a rule to govern the Council's activity, but the motion was never considered. As a result, there were no rules prohibiting *ex parte* communications or outside influences, and Commissioners could be replaced at the behest of the appointing elected official, thereby opening the process to undue influence, conflicts of interest, and possible corruption.

Politics should be kept out of the redistricting process, and appointed Commissioners should have the latitude to follow the principle of community – based line drawing, even when that might upset conventional expectations among elected officials. In 2012 there was an enormous amount of public testimony given and, ultimately, disregarded. My former district (9th Council District) was disconnected from its economic engine, Downtown Los Angeles. It was a coalition district with South Los Angeles tied to Downtown Los Angeles, Little Tokyo and Skid Row. The disruption and severance of that coalition was most unfortunate, since the district had been that way since the 1970s.

The Little Tokyo community wanted very much to remain in the 9th District. Nevertheless, it was placed in the 14th District along with two hotel projects across the street from Staples Arena. (The hotel projects are under review as part

of the ongoing Federal corruption probe of City Hall). Staples was left in the 9th District so that the South Los Angeles portion of the district would have a very minor connection to DTLA. Population shifts did not support the Council's ultimate decision to break down my former district. In the end it was a political decision.

As you move forward, adopt measures that ensure commissioners can deliberate without undue influence from elected officials and third parties. The purpose of charter reform was to provide a truly independent redistricting commission, the execution of that policy in 2012 was deeply flawed.

The city should hire a lawyer with a deep well of experience in the Voting Rights Act. In 2012, the council dismantled existing communities, ignored record evidence in favor of political rewards/punishments.

It was difficult for commissioners to articulate clear goals for drawing lines for the Council districts so there must be clearly articulated governing principles at the start of the process. In the absence of clear goals for how districts are drawn, the loser in the process will always be the public. The charter directs that members should take an account of public testimony, but the directive is meaningless if the commission cannot provide direction to assess and review mapping proposals. I hope the maps have not already been drawn for 2020. You have a unique opportunity to close the door on corruption and reconnect residents to their resource base.