

ATTACHMENT C

From the Email letter from Sylvia Moore to WRAC's Doug Fitzsimmons

RE: CA Common Cause seeking West Los Angeles neighborhood councils support for improving the city's public campaign finance system

CA Common Cause and CA Clean Money are seeking support from the city's neighborhood councils in favor of advancing a number of public financing of elections proposals to the City Council floor.

Specifically, we are seeking community impact statements in favor of urging the City Council to schedule a vote on these proposals. The city's Ethics Commission recently proposed increasing L.A.'s current campaign public matching funds rate to 6:1, and raising the total amounts of matching funds given to qualifying candidates. We believe these recommendations would greatly improve the system, boost the power of small donors in elections and decrease the outsized influence of wealthy special interests. However, the recommendations have been stuck in the city's Rules Committee since 2015.

Several weeks ago, both Councilmembers Ryu and Bonin introduced motions addressing public financing. Councilmember Ryu's motion is in support of the 6:1 proposal and directs the Ethics Commission to draft an ordinance. Councilmember Bonin's motion asks for the idea of a full public financing system to be put before Los Angeles voters in 2018.

We would like for the City Council to have the opportunity to discuss these proposals on the floor and vote on them without further delay. So it would be extremely helpful if we could secure the help of neighborhood councils on the Westside to pressure Council President Wesson and the Council to advance these proposals to the floor. We would also like for stakeholders to contact their individual councilmembers asking for these proposals to be addressed.

I have attached a flyer summarizing the Ethics recommendations, as well as copies of both Ryu and Bonin motions.

Thank you for your time!

Southern California Organizer
[California Common Cause](#) - *Holding Power Accountable*
453 S. Spring St, Suite 401
Los Angeles, CA 90013
[213.623.1216](tel:213.623.1216)

MOTION

“Clean Money Elections for Los Angeles”

The influence of money in our political system casts a long, heavy shadow over our democracy. Candidates are forced to spend inordinate amounts of time seeking out donors instead of voters, creating a widespread perception of influence peddling and corruption, undermining the electorate’s faith in candidates and elected officials, and discouraging voter participation.

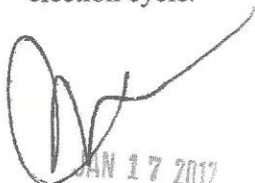
Los Angeles has a long and strong tradition of campaign finance reform. It has a robust public matching funds system, tight contribution limits, strong disclosure and transparency requirements, and a prohibition of donations from lobbyists and fundraising by city commissioners. Yet even Los Angeles’ strong system can be made stronger, increasing voter faith in the process.

In 2005, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl co-authored a motion (CF 05-1536) with then-Councilmembers Eric Garcetti and Wendy Greuel calling for a full public financing system for all elected offices in Los Angeles. That legislation was studied and debated, but no reforms were implemented and the Council File expired in 2011. Subsequent attempts were made to revive such a proposal with no success, often because of the potentially high cost of such a program and the anticipated impacts on the City’s General Fund and its competing priorities: public safety and essential city services.

The concept of “Clean Money,” as it has been called in jurisdictions such as Maine and Arizona, where such programs are in effect, is simple: a level playing field for all candidates is created through a voluntary public financing system. Candidates demonstrate viability by collecting a certain number of low-dollar donations from a large number of constituents, agree to forgo corporate donations, special interest money, further donations from other individuals, or significant self-financing, and in exchange receive a statutorily established amount of money sufficient to run an aggressive and well-financed campaign. Maine and Arizona both have successful versions of public financing that have: led to lowered overall campaign spending; freed candidates from fundraising; increased voter turnout; and encouraged more qualified people to run, including people of color and women.

Tremendous work has been done in recent years to educate the public about this issue, and to move toward a system of publicly-financed elections, including statewide efforts by organizations like “Money Out, Voters In” and the California Clean Money Campaign. The issue of money in elections at all levels of government was also a major theme in the presidential campaign of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, which ignited a movement of people throughout the country who want elections to be more fair and transparent.

With the demand to get money out of politics so strong, with the appetite for reform so prevalent, and with city elections scheduled to move to a new even-year cycle in 2020, the time has come to establish a “Clean Money” system of full public financing of Los Angeles municipal elections. Such a proposal should be submitted to the voters, with a dedicated revenue stream to fully pay for it, in the 2018 election cycle.



JAN 17 2017

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request that the City Ethics Commission consider and submit to City Council for potential voter approval in the 2018 election cycle a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System for all elected offices in the City of Los Angeles.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst work with the City Ethics Commission and staff to develop a cost estimate for a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System for all elected offices in the City of Los Angeles.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council direct the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to report to the Council with potential dedicated funding streams for a Clean Money Public Campaign Financing System that does not impact the General Fund. Specific funding sources to consider should include fees on development, and a severance tax for all oil and gas produced within the City of Los Angeles.

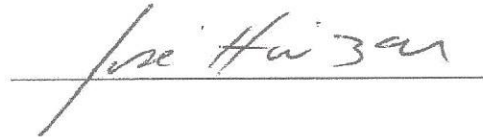
PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN

Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

MOTION

Since the 2010 Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the amount of money being spent to influence political campaigns has sharply increased. Absent a new court ruling, or a constitutional amendment, the City has limited authority to regulate outside spending from moneyed special interests. One of the most effective counterbalances to this unregulated and unaccountable spending, would be to increase the influence of small dollar donations by increasing the rate at which the city provides public matching funds.

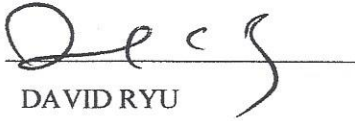
The Los Angeles City Ethics Commission previously submitted a slate of campaign finance reform recommendations in 2014, and, in a more detailed 2015 report, recommended increased matching funds rates for City elections, due to the surplus in the Matching Funds Trust Fund.


The Matching Funds Trust Fund, as envisioned in the City Charter, is intended to reduce the power of moneyed special interests in elections by ensuring qualified candidates will receive enough funding, through public financing, to allow their voices to be heard. At our current rates of match, public funding is not bolstering small dollar donors at the level necessary to ensure qualified candidates can get their message to voters, and the Matching Funds Trust Fund is being replenished at a rate significantly faster than it is being used.


WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Ethics Commission be requested to prepare and present an ordinance and report on the implications of increasing the matching fund rates from the current 2:1 match in primary elections and 4:1 match in general elections to 6:1 in both primary elections and general elections for all candidates who qualify for matching funds.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Ethics Commission be requested to report on whether the maximum per-contribution matches in Sec. 49.7.27 of the Campaign Finance Ordinance should be revised to cap matches at lower levels, such as \$100.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Administrative Officer be directed to report back on any impacts these changes may have on the City's general fund.

CO-PRESENTED BY 
 DAVID RYU
 Councilmember, 4th District

CO-PRESENTED BY 
 PAUL KREKORIAN
 Councilmember, 2nd District

CO-PRESENTED BY 
 JOE BUSCAINO
 Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY 