

Proposal to Promote Good Government and Public Confidence for Long Beach City Government

CITY ETHICS COMMISSION

& CITIZEN REDISTRICTING COMMISSION



Trust in Government

- Many public surveys indicate that public trust in government is at historic lows
- There has been an erosion in public confidence from the national to the local government levels



Long Beach Ethics Task Force

- The City Council approved a recommendation by then-Councilwoman Bonnie Lowenthal in October 2001 to create a Long Beach Ethics Task Force
- The Ethics Task Force presented its report and recommendations in June 2002

Report of the Long Beach Ethics Task Force

Robert W. Parkin, Chair
Mario Cordero, Vice Chair

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Doug Haubert
Dennis Lord
Douglas W. Otto
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June 18, 2002

2002 Long Beach Ethics Task Force Recommendations

- Establish an Office of Ethics for the City of Long Beach
- Require registration of lobbyists and disclosure of lobbying activities
- Make campaign finance reports available online in a timely manner
- Enhance the City's matching fund program
- Establish a local campaign finance audit program
- Provide for disclosure on the record of gifts recently received by City officials from those connected with any matter coming before the official for action
- Set guidelines for outside employment for all full-time City employees
- Establish revolving door policies for former elected and appointed officials and employees

CODE OF ETHICS

On February 6, 2003, the City Council of the City of Long Beach adopted a Code of Ethics, which applies to City employees, officers and commission members. This Code requires that all employees, officers and commission members shall pledge:

- To place the best interests of the City above all other interests.
- To uphold all laws, regulations and policies.
- To take no action for the purpose of benefiting the official or employee personally.
- To make every effort to avoid a conflict of interest.
- To avoid disclosure of confidential information obtained in the performance of his or her duties or in his or her official capacity.
- To exercise prudence and good judgment at all times.
- To be fair, impartial, and unbiased in the decision-making process.
- To treat each other and the public with respect.

Ethics Reform in Long Beach

- In 2007, the City Council voted to establish an Ethics Commission and a Citizen Redistricting Commission and place it on a special election ballot with other charter reform measures.
- However, when placed on the ballot, they were combined with a proposal to establish an Independent Salary Commission to set the City Council salary, which many voters saw as an effort to increase the Council salaries.
- The package of commissions was voted down.

Nearly Every Major City in California has an Ethics Commission

- Los Angeles
 - San Diego
- San Francisco
 - San Jose
 - Berkeley
 - Oakland

Ethics Commission Duties In These Other Cities Include:

- Conflict of Interest
- Campaign Finance
- City Campaign Laws
- Lobbying
- Government Ethics

Citizen Redistricting Commission

- The Long Beach City Council went through a very divisive and politically charged redistricting process in 2011



Citizen Redistricting Commission

- In 2008, California adopted an independent redistricting commission model.
- Good government groups, such as California Common Cause, are supporting this model of citizen redistricting commissions at the local government level.

California Cities with Citizen Redistricting Commissions

- Berkeley
- Chula Vista
- Escondido
- Modesto
- Oakland
- Sacramento
- San Diego
- San Francisco

Promote Good Government and Public Confidence

Recommended Action:

Request the Mayor to Convene the Charter Amendment Committee of the City Council within 30 days to discuss placing a charter amendment before the voters to establish a City Ethics Commission, and to establish a Citizen Redistricting Commission, in order to promote good governance and ensure public confidence in Long Beach city government, and request the City Clerk and City Attorney to develop framework options for the Committee to consider.