



For Immediate Release

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COMMENTS BEFORE THE LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL
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Good evening. My name is Antonio Ruiz, publisher of the new bilingual magazine, Palacio. I am also a former member of the Arts Council Board and a member of several task forces including the one that wrote the last cultural master plan and the Mayor's task force on funding for the arts.

In a recent editorial for Palacio, I stated that it was time, once again, to reimagine the arts in Long Beach. We called for an honest consideration of the formation of a city cultural arts department and an accompanying arts commission where its members are chosen by the Mayor and approved by the Council.

I was part of a group of partners who organized a town hall meeting at the Museum of Latin American art in 2007 called *Reimagining The Arts In Long Beach*. That all day forum led to the updating of the city's cultural master plan called *Create Long Beach* and its integration into the Long Beach 2030 master plan.

If it had been fully implemented, we would be having a different conversation today.

One of the most important goals in Create Long Beach revolved around creating an inclusive arts council and arts constituency. Long beach was just named the second most diverse city after Los Angeles. You will not find that diversity on the board of directors or staff of the arts council.

Mayor Robert Garcia, in a recent interview with Palacio magazine, spoke about his goal to make city board and commissions better reflect the demographics of long beach. I know he was sincere when he said he wanted to ensure that many formally unheard city voices are finally included the body politic.

This is not a call to dismantle the Arts Council For Long Beach. It is a call for rethinking our arts support model in order to guarantee accountability, ensure diversity that is reflective of the communities it serves, and incorporates an effective and proactive community engagement strategy. Many underserved communities need real partners in the arts. We believe other models may better serve those goals.

I would recommend that the city convene a forum or task force or even refer this matter to a council committee for further discussion and recommendations.

In the meantime, Palacio Magazine will continue to work with community members to discuss the important issues of diversity, accountability and the future for the arts in Long Beach for all communities.