

MOTION
Clean Money for a Healthy Democracy

Los Angeles has led the way in many campaign ethics and campaign finance reform efforts over the past two decades, including using public funds to match funds raised by candidates from individuals. Nevertheless, voter turnout in Los Angeles continues a general trend downward and the number of elections producing a competitive general election campaign is also declining.

Full public financing systems, also known as "Clean Money" systems have been discussed recently by the City Ethics Commission. Elected officials, citizens and political observers agree that the level of civic discourse and decision-making has dramatically improved in jurisdictions that have adopted clean money campaign systems. Specifically, the clean money campaign has been a successful model for leveling the playing field and publicly financing elections at the state level in Maine and Arizona.


A campaign finance system that rewards candidates for having the best vision for the city rather than the best fundraising skills would improve citizens' perceptions about and the actual operations of the city.


A system that helps equalize the funding for well-qualified and community-supported candidates would allow candidates to spend more time talking to voters about their concerns and less time talking to campaign contributors, many of whom live outside the areas the candidates seek to represent.


A system that provides well-qualified candidates with adequate funding to mount citywide campaigns will produce competitive elections that will provide citizens in Los Angeles with real choices about the leadership and direction of the city. Furthermore, citizens who would not otherwise think of running for City office because of the amount of money and fundraising that is required by the current system would be able to mount viable campaigns if a clean campaign system were in place.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Chief Legislative Analyst, in consultation with the City Ethics Commission, City Clerk, City Administrative Officer, Mayor Villaraigosa and the California Clean Money Campaign to report back to the City Council within 90 days on the feasibility and potential costs of implementing a Clean Money campaign system in Los Angeles for all elected offices in the City of Los Angeles.

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