

Remarks upon Accepting the Council Presidency

Eric Garcetti
July 3rd, 2007

Thank you, City Clerk Martinez.

And thank you to my colleagues for this honor of serving as your council president.

I accept this position with purpose.

Our purpose is reflected in the very firmament of this building, where in 1928, our predecessors laid a cornerstone filled with sand from every county and water from every mission in this state.

Our families come here from different places.

Our professional backgrounds are wide-ranging and diverse.

And we represent very different parts of Los Angeles.

But we serve one city.

Just as we take an oath to serve our city and its people, I promise to do everything in my power to serve you for the next two years.

Each of us around this horseshoe is blessed—we serve in the most open, robust, and vibrant legislative body anywhere in this country.

In a nation where people feel increasingly isolated from their government and from their elected officials, our course runs counter to that.

People come to council chambers to share their joy, their anger, their tragedies, and their hopes with this body and, in turn, with this city.

The challenges our city faces and the accomplishments it realizes can be an inspiration to the world.

There is no city on this earth exactly like ours—mosaic neighborhoods that are home to the city's newest residents, a strong and always-evolving economy, the creative capital of the world.

Against this backdrop, our duty is to enable all the people of our city to achieve a good life – an affordable place to call home, a safe neighborhood with good schools, clean air and water, an opportunity to work hard and be able to support your family.

We face serious issues that have real consequences.

But this council has the power to confront and resolve these issues and to leave our mark on this great city for future generations.

We are literally changing the course of a river.

We are making communities safer and creating new opportunities for our city's youth.

We are balancing this city's budget, and protecting vital city services.

We are building new busways and rail lines.

We are cleaning our waterways and preserving more of our resources.

We are expanding shelter beds and building more units of housing than we have seen in decades.

And as councilmembers, we are responding to crisis, whether in the wake of a neighborhood shooting or a fire that ravages our city's hills.

We have shown we have the power and purpose to lead.

But the council's leadership does not reside in me, or even in the president pro tempore, the assistant president pro tempore and me. It resides in fifteen individuals around this horseshoe.

What makes this body great is not any one of us; it is the collective wisdom, experience, and passion of us all.

In fact, the next great idea for moving this city forward will come from the person in the chair right next to you.

So in the next two years, let us not only lead but let us listen.

Let us listen to each other.

Let us listen to our constituents.

And let us listen to this great city.

Thank you for electing me to lead this body for the next two years.

Today we begin the 99th session of the Los Angeles City Council. We are the inheritors of a proud tradition stretching back to this city's *ayuntamiento*, the original town council that first met in 1812.

But we are also the inheritors of a great story—the growth and evolution of one of the greatest cities in human history.

In this 99th session of our council, in our city's 226th year, let us write a proud chapter in that history.

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