

Martinez, Ruben

From: Melissa
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2021 11:26 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda #15: campaign finance

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Hello

I'm shocked and stupefied as to why anyone in their right mind would propose this undemocratic ordinance let alone vote yes on it. This country needs more campaign finance laws not fewer. Is this because you as candidates are lazy and prefer to woo a few big donors rather than the populace of Pasadena, who are essentially the ones you are to represent? Don't tell us you will remain neutral after monied interests around town have given you tons of money to get in office - we do not buy that for a minute. Why not remove any doubts, remove the opportunity for the public to question your principles and put in reasonable donation limits, like what has most recently been voted on in Alhambra. Several years ago, thousands and thousands of Alhambra put in a referendum with the County of LA because the 5 City Councilmembers of Alhambra wouldn't put in campaign finance reform in the city law. What you are doing now is even worse - you're putting in a law explicitly stating it's ok for candidates to be bought off by highest bidders. In November last year, Alhambra voted over 70% to put a cap of \$250 per donor per candidate. Now our councilpeople will be answerable to us the masses of people, not a few developers and friends in high places. Even though the ordinance became law this year, two councilmembers are already in office thanks to following their own self-imposed cap. Please restore Pasadena's trust in governance and in you, vote NO on the language of this ordinance you are considering, and simply put in a donation cap like Alhambra did.

Melissa Michelson

-Elected member of LA County Democratic Party, AD 49 -CA Democratic Party delegate, AD 49 -Lead organizer of San Gabriel Valley Progressive Alliance -President, Feel the Bern Democratic Club, Los Angeles

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: Gary Green <garygreen@cityofpasadena.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2021 11:26 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Campaign Contribution Limits


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<https://mydoit.cityofpasadena.net/sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0010263> .

It has come to my intention that the Pasadena City Council is planning to vote to allow unlimited contributions to City election campaigns. In my opinion this is a horrible choice. There is enough corruption in government caused by "contributions" to office seekers. In some sense many of these gifts are actually bribes. There are many contentious issues in our city. Money should not be a factor in the approval of a development, the altering of zoning laws, the issuance of permits, etc. Eliminating the ceiling on campaign contributions would allow those with the most money to become the drivers of city policy and actions. We need ways to involve more people in the process, not ways to increase the power of the rich. They already have more than their share of power. Please, do not eliminate limits on contributions. If fact, I would like to see the limit reduced to less than \$1,000. I understand that another area city capped contributions at \$250.00 by popular vote. Perhaps Pasadena should put a reasonable limit to a vote by the people.

Sincerely,

Gary Green,


Pasadena, CA 91107

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: Eloise Kaeck <eloise@pasadenaclean.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 16, 2021 2:05 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse; Porras, Susana
Subject: limit local campaign contributions

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We need to limit political campaign contributions to \$3,000 and under! We don't want monied people and businesses buying influence. Let's keep Pasadena clean and grass roots.

thanks,

eloise kaeck

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: interfaithquaker@aol.com
Sent: Saturday, October 16, 2021 5:37 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse; Gordo, Victor; Madison, Steve; Rivas, Jessica; Kennedy, John J.; Hampton, Tyron; Masuda, Gene; Williams, Felicia; Mermell, Steve
Subject: Limit campaign contributions Item #15

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Dear Mayor and City Council,

I am requesting the names of people and organizations that donated more than \$5,000 to your campaign. You are required by the Political Reform Act to file campaign statements by specified deadlines disclosing contributions received and expenditures made. Where can the public find statements about who donated to your campaign, and how much? I would like this information before the next Council meeting when you are considering item #15.

Frankly I was disturbed and somewhat shocked to learn that all but one City Council members feel that it is necessary to have campaign contributions over \$5,000 in order to get elected. Only the wealthy elite can afford to give that amount of money. Many in our city believe that this Council is biased toward the wealthy elite and your desire not to have any limits on campaign contributions reinforces this public perception.

I also urge you to follow the example of Alhambra. Its citizens voted overwhelmingly (75 percent) to limit campaign contributions to \$250 per person. If Pasadenans could vote on campaign contribution limits, they would probably want a similar limit. People want to get money out of politics. We don't want our elected officials to be beholden to rich donors when they make important decisions affecting our city.

Anthony Manousos

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From:
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 8:54 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Limit donations by police and fire departments! Response to item #15

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Dear Mayor Gordo and City Councilmembers,

I am appalled when I learned that the Pasadena Police Department's officers' association spent \$87,373 on behalf of candidates' campaigns. It seems unethical for the police to be allowed to contribute large sums of money to candidates who will then vote on their budget, salaries, and other matters. Given how much you have received from the police, it is not surprising that you almost always approve their requests for more funds.

Instead of allowing unlimited donations to your campaigns, as you propose to do with item #15, I urge you to limit the donations of police department to \$5,000, just like other donations. In fact, I'd prefer that you limit all donations to \$250, just like Al Hambra. Then we the public could feel confident that you are making decisions based on what's best for the city, not what's best for your big donors.

Florence Annang shares my views on police donations being used for leverage: "Let's be real about that," she said in an interview [in the Star News]. "If there's anything they (the association) want to do, they have leverage to do it because they've invested in those people. Unions don't give money to elected officials just because. They do it because in times of need, they're going to call on you."

Here's what was reported in the Star News:

- Councilman Steve Madison's campaign received a \$10,000 donation while the association spent \$22,147 in independent expenditures. Madison said he was not aware of the independent expenditures until he was contacted by this newsgroup. Madison received more than any other candidate or council member in this election.
- Councilman Gene Masuda's campaign received a \$10,000 donation while the association spent \$19,898 in independent expenditures. Like Madison, Masuda said he wasn't aware of it until asked.
- Councilwoman-elect Felicia Williams' campaign received a \$7,500 donation and \$8,127 in independent expenditures. Williams declined to comment.
- Councilman Tyron Hampton's campaign received \$5,000 but no independent expenditures. Hampton ran unopposed during this election.
- Unsuccessful council hopefuls Tricia Keane, Kevin Litwin, Bo Patatian and Char Bland each received between \$500 and \$1,000, but no independent expenditures. Records indicate that Bland ultimately gave the money back to the association.

I was pleased to see that Mayor Gordo did not accept any money from the police association, and that Steve Madison said he was a staunch supporter of campaign finance reform.

Limiting the money that police and fire department give to candidates would be an important step towards campaign finance reform.

Sincerely,

Anthony Manousos

Martinez, Ruben

From: Jon Fuhrman
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 11:28 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Campaign Contribution Limits

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Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

I was distressed to see that the City Council is moving to waive all limits on contributions to City Council candidates. I think that's a bad idea in and of itself. Worse, though, I think it directly violates the spirit and intent of the state law.

I know that technically the law states cities can establish other limits, and I understand the City Attorney's argument that no limit qualifies as an other limit. But if you look at the "Findings" adopted by the Legislature as a preface to AB 571, you can see that is not at all what they anticipated.

SECTION 1.

The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) Most states impose limitations on contributions to candidates for elective county and city offices. California is among the minority of states without these contribution limitations.
- (b) Most counties and cities in this state have not independently imposed limitations on contributions to candidates for elective offices in those jurisdictions.
- (c) In counties and cities in this state that have not imposed limitations on contributions, candidates for elective offices in those jurisdictions often receive contributions that would exceed the limitations for a state Senate campaign, even though most counties and cities contain far fewer people than the average state Senate district.
- (d) In counties and cities in this state that have not imposed limitations on contributions, candidates for elective office in those jurisdictions sometimes raise 40 percent or more of their total campaign funds from a single contributor.
- (e) A system allowing unlimited contributions to a candidate for elective county or city office creates the risk and the perception that elected officials in those jurisdictions are beholden to their contributors and will act in the best interest of those contributors at the expense of the people.
- (f) This state has a statewide interest in preventing actual corruption and the appearance of corruption at all levels of government.
- (g) This act establishes a limitation on contributions to a candidate for elective office in a city or county in which the local government has not established a limitation. However, a local government may establish a different limitation that is more precisely tailored to the needs of its communities.

The whole thrust of the Findings is to eliminate the possibility of unlimited contributions, while allowing cities to establish a "different limitation that is more precisely tailored to the needs to the community". That was clearly intended to allow cities (like LA) and counties (like LA and Ventura) to keep the lower limits they already impose. It is manifestly not intended to allow communities to dodge the law and say the sky's the limit. Findings (d), (e) and (f) clearly point to the dangers that the lack of any limits introduce into local politics and assert that the state has a statewide interest in preventing "actual corruption and the appearance of corruption" at all levels of government. Surely that is something we can all agree upon, and surely placing modest limits on campaign contributions will not be overly burdensome on our local candidates.

Please note that this does not prevent a candidate from self-funding their campaign, to whatever level he or she feels appropriate. A candidate's contributions to their own campaign are exempt from campaign contributions limits.

Further, most candidates, both incumbents and challengers, have formally or informally chosen not to accept contributions in excess of \$5,000, so adhering to this limit would have had virtually no impact on recent campaigns. Further, the limit is per election, so if a candidate is forced into a run-off, the candidate can accept \$4,900 contributions from the same person for the primary and then again for the run-off election. Additionally, the limits are per person, so two spouses can each give the maximum amount, and can do so for each election. Thus, a couple could contribute nearly \$20,000 to a candidate who ran in both a primary and a run-off election.

Lastly, the contribution limit is doubled for small contributor committees -- committees that raise funds in small dollar contributions from a large membership base (like the political action funds of a teachers' union or a firefighters' union), and again the contribution limit applies separately to a primary and run-off election.

I hope, upon reflection, you will reconsider your support of the proposal. Having a \$4,900 limit (indexed to inflation) seems quite reasonable and sufficient. There is no reason to harp upon "local rule" and insist that we go our own way.

Jon Fuhrman

, Pasadena, CA 91105-2749

Martinez, Ruben

From: Stephanie Shlasky
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 1:01 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Campaign Contributions, Agenda Item #15 - City Council Meeting on Monday, October 18, 2021

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Mayor Gordo and members of the Pasadena City Council:

I was shocked to discover that nearly all members of the Pasadena City Council as well as Mayor Gordo voted to eliminate any limitations on campaign contributions to candidates for office in the City of Pasadena.

The State of California places a limitation of \$4,900 on contributions to candidates for statewide office while the City of Los Angeles, a city that is many times the size of Pasadena, limits campaign contributions for candidates to their city's offices to \$800.

It is apparent that the City of Pasadena should limit campaign contributions along the lines of what the City of Los Angeles has instituted, which would be about \$250, based on the size of our City relative to that of Los Angeles.

Eliminating a limitation on campaign contributions creates the impression that anyone with enough money can buy their way to doing anything they want to do in the City of Pasadena, whether or not it would be good for the community at large or the district in which the project were to be located.

Please vote "No" on the elimination of campaign contributions and institute a reasonable limit that would be applicable to all candidates for office in our city.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Shlasky

Pasadena, CA
District 3

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: Ken Kules <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 1:26 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: ITEM 15: CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMIT

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The argument for the proposed ordinance is that it continues "business as usual." What is actually happening is that the proposed ordinance makes an affirmative statement to those that would use money to sway elections that unlimited contributions are OK. The state law should remain in place to limit the power of money to influence elections (No Action: Alternative 3).

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: Linda Simmons <>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 1:43 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: No to Unlimited Campaign Donations

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To Mayor Gordo and City Council Members Hampton, Williams, Kennedy, Masuda, Rivas, Madison, Wilson
RE: No to Unlimited Campaign Donations

What could be more detrimental to representative government than the allowance for unlimited campaign donations? As with state and national politics, the millionaires *du jour*, in many cases, have successfully taken representation out of representative government. If there were unlimited campaign donations at the local level, how would the average citizens of Pasadena be represented if the wealthy elites could control the outcome of every election? This would also eliminate the need for Pasadena candidates to interact with their constituents when dealing with local issues, and to stick by their campaign promises once elected. Elected officials would be beholden to their wealthy donors, who, in essence would serve not only as contributors, but also, as lobbyists who could manipulate the outcome of each election and control our city government. We've seen this happen countless times at state and national levels. Why would Pasadena be any different? The current \$3,000.00 limit per person on individual donations has worked for us to this point, so what would be the purpose of unlimited donations other than to corrupt city government? Please *do not* vote in favor of unlimited campaign donations.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simmons

Resident of Pasadena

Retired Educator

Linda Simmons

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: Marsha Rood <
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 7:04 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Item # 15 NO LIMITS FOR CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

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MTG. DATE: October 18, 2021

TO: Pasadena City Council
FROM: Marsha V. Rood
RE: Item No. 15; No limits for campaign contributions

I strongly oppose the Pasadena City Council's proposal to adopt an ordinance providing for unlimited campaign contributions to city candidates. Rather, this City Council should take this opportunity to reform the political campaign funding process for the City. Jesse Unruh, former speaker of the California Assembly, once said, "*Money is the mother's milk of politics.*" The City Council should not put its stamp of approval on this approach to politics. City Council members must not be accountable to those who contribute the most money and/or make the largest in-kind campaign contributions to council campaigns. Instead, council members should be accountable to the citizens of Pasadena. No limits on campaign contributions would further fuel the ever escalating costs of local elections, the competition for funding and over accommodation to special interests.

The City Council should put into place election and campaign spending laws which place limits on the amount someone can donate to a candidate's campaigns and campaign events, either directly or indirectly, as well as requiring mandatory disclosure. On this basis, I recommend that the City Council draft and unanimously approve a municipal ordinance to:

- 1. Place reasonable limits per contributor on the funding of local campaigns in Pasadena.**
- 2. Prohibit campaign (and other) contributions from developers.**
- 3. Prohibit contributions from developer representatives, including attorneys.**
- 4. Prohibit contributions from public employees unions.**
- 5. Prohibit distribution of campaign material by public employee unions.**
- 6. Prohibit endorsement advertising by public employee unions.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Marsha Rood
Pasadena, CA

10/18/2021
Item 15

We are deeply troubled by the city council's proposal in a time in our history when decisions such as Citizens United v. FEC have caused unlimited, anonymous donations to flood the coffers of our politicians, preventing average people from having a shot at holding elected office.

At their meeting of August 16, 2021, the Pasadena City Council voted 6-1 to approve an "ordinance codifying no limit on campaign contributions" for local races for Pasadena City Council and Mayor. It was postponed due to a packed agenda, but will be heard at the Monday October 18th meeting. If passed, this ordinance would override state law for city candidates (which sets limits at \$4900 per donor) and will allow candidates for Pasadena City Council and Mayor to accept huge, unlimited donations.

We strongly oppose this undemocratic ordinance which puts power in the hands of moneyed interests. We call on Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers to rescind this decision. Rather, we request the city council place reasonable per-contributor limits on direct funding of local campaigns the same way sensible cities such as Los Angeles, Alhambra and South Pasadena have. Los Angeles, with a population of almost 4 million people has a limit of \$800, in contrast to Pasadena with a much, much smaller population of only 140,000 people, while sister-city Alhambra has set limits much lower: \$250 per contributor.

Pasadena is one of the most inequitable cities in California with ever-widening economic divides. The wealthy already have far too much sway in Pasadena politics. We agree with the Campaign Legal

Center which states: “The First Amendment guarantees every American the right to participate fully in the political process. It is well-known that the dependence of political candidates on wealthy special interests is a serious flaw in our political system, and makes elected officials responsive to their large donors rather than to the public. The tremendous power of special interest money in politics often drowns out the voice of everyday Americans, threatens our First Amendment freedoms, and erodes the foundations of our entire democracy.”

Additionally, they stated that in order to restore fairness to our political system, the passing and enforcing of strong campaign finance reforms that help guarantee a democracy responsive to the people is urgently needed, including placing reasonable limits on the funding of campaigns, complete transparency of campaign spending, and public financing of elections. (Campaign Legal Center 2020; Brennan Center 2018; Public Citizen 2020; Common Cause 2016)

Frankly, it is alarming that the city council voted on August 16 to place no dollar limits on local campaign contributions. This proposal is completely at odds with the views of most voters. According to the Pew Research Center, “77% of Americans say there should be limits on the amount of money individuals and groups can spend on campaigns.” The Pasadena City Council took a fringe and untenable position on this matter. Pasadena is actually an ideal city to show how effective grassroots, door-to-door politics can be.

As a candidate, Mayor Gordo promised to ensure that “local city government is responsive...and accountable to residents,” and exemplifies “a Pasadena that truly listens, is inclusive of everyone, [and] stands with our families, our seniors, and our youth.”

It’s time now for Mayor Victor Gordo and Pasadena Councilmembers to lead the fight for a truly inclusive local city government. We respectfully urge you, Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers, to stand with our families and communities in urgently, following the lead of dozens of other Southern California cities. Doing so would engender trust in Pasadena city leaders and candidates and help create a City that is truly more inclusive of everyone.

The Pasadena City Council will meet next Monday October 18, 2021 to conduct a first reading of the ordinance codifying no limit on campaign contributions. The agenda for the October 18 Council should be available by 6 P.M. this Thursday October 14, 2021 at the Pasadena City Council Website, including information about how you can submit public comment to the Council with your feedback on agenda items to be heard.

Martinez, Ruben

From: Lisa Quinn <lisaquinn@publiccomment.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 7:31 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: No limit to campaign spending

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To those of you who are voting on this:

This is a TERRIBLE idea! It gives an unfair advantage to individuals who are wealthy and/or those who are supported by groups with lots of money.

Please do not vote for this!

Lisa Quinn

10/18/2021
Item 15

Martinez, Ruben

From: _____
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 8:36 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Public Comment Item 15. Ordinance...No Campaign Contribution Limit

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Item 15. Conduct first reading of “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA ... NO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMIT”

City Council’s 6-1 vote on August 16, 2021 to approve an ordinance codifying no limit on campaign contributions for Candidates for Pasadena City Council and Mayor was shocking and constitutes a breach of public trust.

If this ordinance were to be adopted, the City of Pasadena would join other corrupt jurisdictions in California where large campaign contributions determine the outcome of issues which affect all residents – a “Pay for Play” system.

City Council Districts in Pasadena are relatively small and the best way for a candidate to meet constituents is to “walk the neighborhood”. Recent candidates for City Council and for Mayor have indeed walked the neighborhoods in anticipation of elections. Money corrupts and Pasadena already suffers from serious economic divides; campaign contributions are especially pernicious when it comes to building permits and zoning, not to mention City contracts.

AB 571 established default campaign contribution limits for County and City candidates at \$4,900 per donor, the same level as for State candidates. There is absolutely no need for Pasadena to override state law with this proposed city ordinance.

PLEASE VOTE TO RESCIND THIS ORDINANCE AND ESTABLISH REASONABLE CONTRIBUTION LIMITS, OR SIMPLY ABIDE BY THE CONTRIBUTION LIMITS OF AB 571.

Genette Foster
Pasadena 91106

10/18/2021
Item 15

From: Ellen Finkelpearl <ellen.finkelpearl@panix.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 11:52 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: Una Jost; denise@panix.com; Ryan Bell
Subject: Open Letter of Opposition to Ordinance on NO campaign finance limits

Dear Mayor Gordo and Pasadena City Council,
In the interest of transparency, we are sending you the draft of a letter which we will submit in final form tomorrow. The only changes will involve the addition of a few more signatures and any corrections and affiliations the signers may wish to add. Please see letter below signed by over 120 people indicating strong opposition to Agenda Item #15 of tomorrow's meeting.

Denise Robb

[illegible]

Open Letter to Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo and City Councilmembers to lead Pasadena's Fight for a Truly Inclusive Government by Implementing Urgently Needed Campaign Finance Reform We, the undersigned local community leaders, advocates, and residents respectfully urge Pasadena Mayor Victor Go...

On the other hand, the

1

Martinez, Ruben

From: Candace Seu <seu@candaceseu.com>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 12:49 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 10/18/21 Item #15 - Opposition to Ordinance (2.05.230)

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Mayor and Councilmembers,

I strongly **oppose** the proposal to not limit campaign contributions in Pasadena, for all of the reasons noted in the open letter.

Regarding this excerpt from the August 26, 2021 staff report (AR 19):

"It was noted by committee members that local disclosures of campaign contributions, which are posted online, already provide **sunshine and transparency** regarding individuals that participate financially in Pasadena City Council elections" (emphasis added),

I'd like to point out that there's a lot of "transparency" about Krysten Sinema's money, and it **hasn't solved the fundamental problem that her non-wealthy constituents effectively don't have any representation right now.**

With respect to this excerpt re: adoption of limits different from the state:

"This would necessitate a discussion on...unintended consequences created by campaign contribution limits (i.e. an increase to independent expenditures, **which may result in less disclosure and reduced transparency regarding the source of political contributions**)" (emphasis added)

Are we talking about de facto bribery? If so, it's probably going to happen even without contribution limits, so **maybe we should be having a conversation about how to craft policies to better protect against that too, rather than using it as a justification to maintain the current system.**

I'm calling on you to stand for the promises you keep making about Pasadena being inclusive and representative of everyone, regardless of economic privilege. Set contribution limits.

Respectfully,

Candace Seu

**10/18/2021
Item 15**

Martinez, Ruben

From: Fife, Elizabeth
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 10:15 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Please rescind Council's Aug. 16 vote for unlimited campaign contributions to city candidates

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Hello Major Gordo and City Council Members,

As a long time Pasadena resident, I am deeply disturbed by Item 15 on today's City Council agenda to prepare an ordinance codifying into law unlimited campaign contributions for candidates running for office in Pasadena. This is completely contrary to what we want in our city: equality, decisions that make sense rather than those tainted by profit-oriented concerns, and government officials that listen to their constituency, rather than the highest bidders.

Please rescind the Council's August 16 vote to prepare for unlimited campaign contributions and instead put in place reasonable limits on direct funding in line with our surrounding cities.

Do what's right for local government and participatory democratic processes.

Best Regards,
Elizabeth Fife

Elizabeth Fife, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Technical Communication Practice
Viterbi School of Engineering, OHE 104
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089

10/18/2021
Item 15