



MEDIA RELEASE

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Restoring Accountability: Eye on Sacramento Releases Package of Proposed City Ethics, Transparency and Redistricting Reforms

At a press conference this morning, local government watchdog group Eye on Sacramento (EOS) presented a package of ethics, transparency and redistricting reforms proposals for the City of Sacramento.

"The reform proposals we are releasing today are the culmination of ten very well-attended public forums held in every part of Sacramento earlier this year, followed by three months of extensive research and careful deliberation by our numerous volunteers and study groups," said EOS president Craig Powell. "These reforms are designed to make Sacramento the most open, transparent and ethically accountable municipal government in California and to help restore citizens' trust in their city government. It's a package in which we, as citizens and residents of Sacramento, can take real pride," Powell added.

The package includes summaries of each of the "Four Pillars of Reform:"

(1) A cutting edge **Sunshine Ordinance** that will make it easier for residents to participate, and have a more effective role, in City decision-making and will open up City government records and data to public review and media scrutiny to the greatest extent practicable;

(2) An **Ethics Code** that will set minimal standards of ethical conduct expected of our city officials;

(3) An independent and empowered **Ethics Commission** that will have the means and authority to hold public officials accountable for misconduct and to exonerate them whenever they're subjected to unsubstantiated claims, through the application of rules that will provide strong due process protections; and

(4) An independent citizens **Redistricting Commission** that will, at long last, bring an end to the unhealthy and undemocratic practice of councilmembers drawing their own council district lines (aka picking their own voters) and shift that power to a panel of citizens who will have final authority to draw council district boundaries.

Also presented was a 12-page "Summary of Public Comment" (copy attached), that recaps the numerous comments received from the public at our Kick-Off Forum in February, our seven District Forums and our final Work Shop Forum at the Clunie Clubhouse on May 17th. The forums were jointly sponsored by EOS and the League of Women Voters, as well as 23 co-sponsoring community organizations.

Public Disclosure of Proposals Before Closed-Door Negotiations With City Officials

"Representatives of our reform effort are expecting to meet within the next few days with city officials in closed door meetings to discuss our reform proposals in detail, to explore common ground and to, hopefully, reach agreement on the adoption/endorsement of a set of reforms that are mutually acceptable to all parties," Powell said.

"Before our representatives go behind closed doors to negotiate these proposals, however, we feel we have an obligation to first release our reform proposals to our forum attendees, our supporters, the media and the public at large," Powell added. "The public deserves to know exactly where we stand at the beginning of these negotiations so that they can assess where we end up at the end of them," Powell concluded.

Plan B: A Ballot Initiative

“We’re pursuing these reforms on two different, but parallel, tracks. Given the significant time and effort it takes to qualify an initiative for the November 2016 general election ballot, we’re entering into negotiations with city officials in pursuit of a mutual agreement while we’re concurrently taking the steps necessary to qualify our reform proposals for the November 2016 ballot,” said Powell. “It is our great preference that we reach an acceptable agreement with city officials, but we’re doing the necessary ground work to bring our reform proposals before Sacramento voters in November 2016,” Powell added.

"Given the growing number of claims asserted against councilmembers, the city auditor's recent finding of nepotism in the Department of Utilities, the city's efforts this year to mass delete 85 million e-mails, the alleged use of city staff and resources for political purposes and the shrouding of city e-mails via the use of private e-mail accounts, the need to establish accountability in city government through effective ethics, transparency and redistricting reforms is acute," Powell concluded.

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