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Dear Friends,

The City of Los Angeles is facing the most perilous financial situation in its history. Due to the declining economy, the City is facing a \$530 million deficit for the coming fiscal year, and we are projecting a \$1 billion deficit for FY 10-11. The mayor has declared a fiscal emergency, and the City could run out of cash early next year if we do not take corrective action.

These stark realities require hard decisions to ensure the continued financial solvency of our City and the continued ability to protect public safety and provide basic City services.

Last night, the Budget and Finance Committee approved a balanced budget that will go to the full council next Monday. I voted with the majority of the committee to continue hiring firefighters so we can grow the ranks of LAFD. When responding to fires and medical emergencies, response time is key, and I want to make sure we have enough personnel to protect life and property.

The mayor has used scare tactics and fear mongering to criticize the Budget and Finance Committee by saying that the budget we approved makes deep cuts to firefighters. He has said that they won't be able to respond in time to save lives. The mayor is lumping police and fire together to scare people into supporting his police hiring plan. For the fire department, the committee approved the budget that the mayor proposed, and I expect him to be honest and consistent in his public remarks.

I also voted with the majority of the committee to temporarily delay expansion of LAPD to avoid gutting the ranks of civilian city staff and making drastic cuts to basic city services. Continuing the police hiring plan would mean 1,100 civilian layoffs in the coming year and another 2,500 layoffs in the following year. These civilians provide youth recreational programs and operate senior citizen centers; they sweep our streets and staff our libraries. Eviscerating these programs in order to expand the

LAPD would be irresponsible. That is not my idea of shared sacrifice. Public safety is my top priority, but it is not my only priority.

In fact, the mayor's police hiring plan would be so expensive that it would force existing officers to take unpaid days off per year, actually decreasing the police deployment.

This is not a decision I made lightly, and I continue to support the growth of LAPD to 10,000 officers and beyond. However, given the City's unprecedented financial straits, we simply cannot afford to proceed until we have the money. It would be irresponsible to risk bankruptcy in order to continue hiring more police officers, and considering the deficit for FY 10-11, it would be irresponsible to hire more officers now, only to lay them off next year.

Furthermore, I was disheartened to hear Chief William Bratton's comments that he would soon begin to pull dozens of officers out of the Westside in response to the committee's action. His comments smacked of political retribution, and you deserve better than that from your chief of police. Police deployment decisions should be based on public safety and the best interests of our City's residents, period.

There may certainly be a way to resume hiring police officers soon, and the mayor is currently negotiating with City unions to identify additional savings. If and when those savings are identified and realized, resumption of the police hiring plan is my first priority. We can and we will grow the LAPD – as soon as we can afford it. I say to the mayor: show me the money, and you'll have my support for more officers.

Regards,



BILL ROSENDAHL

Councilmember, 11th District