



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilmembers Look to Bring Public Campaign Financing and Instant Runoff Voting to City

Huizar and Rosendahl hope to have motion placed on March Ballot

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 23, 2008) – Councilmember José Huizar introduced a proposal today calling for public financing of City Elections funded in part by Instant Runoff Voting, a ranking system that eliminates the need for costly runoff elections and is used across the world and in several cities in California, including San Francisco.

The proposal, which was seconded by Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, calls for using any savings derived from the election system switch, which would eliminate the need for runoff elections in City, LAUSD and Community College District races, on implementing a Clean Money Fund to support the public financing of City elections.

“This will allow for a more balanced and open playing field for City and other local elections, while saving potentially millions of dollars in unnecessary election costs,” Huizar said. “Public campaign financing and Instant Runoff Voting in the City of Los Angeles could go a long way in addressing public apathy toward local politics and the election process as a whole.”

“When you talk real campaign finance reform, this is a huge step in the right direction,” said Councilmember Bill Rosendahl. “This will save taxpayers' money and will move us closer to finally getting the Clean Money initiative in LA City.”

In Instant Runoff Voting, voters choose their top three candidates and if there is no candidate with more than 50 percent of the vote, voters second and third choices are added up until one candidate gets more than 50 percent.

(more)

Councilmembers Look to add Public Campaign Financing and Instant Runoff Voting to City Law

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“We thank Councilman Huizar for taking the lead on putting Instant Runoff Voting on the ballot,” said Gautam Dutta, with New America Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy organization. “If fully implemented, IRV will boost voter turnout and save Los Angeles taxpayers \$8 million to \$9 million per election.”

The deadline to place a matter on the March ballot is October 30. The motion is expected to be heard before the Rules Committee at one of its upcoming October meetings.

City officials estimate that approximately half of the cost of a public financing system could come from savings derived from eliminating runoff elections. This would reduce the number of elections that voters are asked to participate in, thereby reducing “voter fatigue” and increasing voting figures, while at the same time saving millions of dollars in election costs.

Huizar said that in the weeks to come he will be releasing other proposals to come up with the necessary funding to create a more robust program to support the public financing of campaigns as a further measure to reform the City’s election process.

“This is the first step in what could be a very meaningful change in City and local elections: one where candidates are on equal footing, beholden to no one but the taxpayers who elect them,” Huizar said.

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