



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Councilmembers Huizar and Weiss Succeed in Getting LAFD Oversight Position on March Ballot**

*Independent Assessor would report to the LAFD Commission and help oversee LAFD's reform efforts*

**LOS ANGELES (Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008)** – Hoping to continue to stem the tide against sexual and racial discrimination lawsuits against the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to back Council members José Huizar and Jack Weiss' motion to ask voters to approve a ballot measure seeking the creation of an independent monitor for the LAFD.

"Today's vote is one of many important steps we've taken to cut back on completely avoidable lawsuits against this fine department," said Councilmember José Huizar, following the vote to place the measure on the March 2009 ballot. "And I'm proud to say that both the department and the union representing the rank-and-file support this measure. This speaks volumes to their commitment to keep the focus of the department on the brave and outstanding work they do on behalf of the City's residents daily."

"The Fire Department has taken strides to improve management and prevent actions that could lead to lawsuits, and this Independent Assessor will provide an additional level of oversight and accountability for the department," said Councilmember Jack Weiss. "Working together, the new Professional Standards Division and Independent Assessor will ensure fairness and objectivity in the disciplinary process."

(more)

**Council members succeed in placing LAFD assessor on March 2009 ballot**  
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Since the Independent Assessor would act as a public advocate and report directly to the fire department's civilian Board of Fire Commissioners, and not to the Chief, a City Charter amendment is necessary to make the change.

The action comes on the heels of a critical 2006 audit by the City Controller and the controversy over the Tennie Pierce lawsuit. It is aimed at ensuring the public that the reforms currently being instituted at the LAFD under Chief Douglas L. Barry are here to stay and that discipline rules are consistently enforced.

The Audits & Governmental Efficiency Committee, chaired by Huizar, and the Public Safety Committee, chaired by Weiss, have been meeting jointly on a regular basis since January, when a new set of LAFD discipline standards were introduced, to spur the department to accelerate its efforts at implementing reform.

LAFD is set to hire the last remaining positions of its New Professional Standards Division, which will oversee internal discipline and investigate complaints by members of the public and among LAFD personnel. The highest priority will be placed on complaints between firefighters that have the potential to result in large lawsuits against the City.

The March 2009 ballot measure would require a simple majority to pass.

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