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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilmember Huizar Urges Early Retirements as a Means to Close Budget Gap and Prioritize Public Safety

Budget & Finance Committee also adopts two of the Councilmember's long-term budget reforms

LOS ANGELES (May 13, 2009) – In today's marathon Budget & Finance Committee meeting, Councilmember José Huizar honored his promise to City residents to support the police and fire departments while promoting early retirement as a way to resolve the budget deficit. In addition, the committee adopted Councilmember Huizar's two measures to curb long-term City costs.

- Councilmember Huizar asked that the bulk of the deficit be fixed by encouraging early retirements and furloughs, as opposed to layoffs. A report on this proposal is due Monday.
- He secured \$300,000 to help City Departments implement zero-based budget plans, which could save the City millions of dollars in future budget years.
- He received approval from his colleagues to implement a new risk-assessment process requiring departments to manage their own litigation budgets beginning in the 2010-2011 budget year in order to reduce liability costs for the City.
- He voted to prioritize public safety by refusing to cut police and fire department hiring, thereby maintaining the City's commitment to increasing the police force to 10,000 officers. If implemented, these cuts would negatively impact the quality of life for the City's residents.

"I cannot in good conscience look into the eyes of a crime victim's family knowing that I didn't do everything in my power to fight for improved public safety," Councilmember José Huizar said following his vote against City's staff recommendation to freeze sworn officer hiring and eliminate funding for 40 additional officers. "With regard to solving the deficit, we must be creative about solutions."

(more)

Huizar Supports Public Safety, Early Retirement, Reform

Page 2

"I support early retirement plans as the first option before even discussing furloughs or layoffs. In addition, this unfortunate crisis highlights the need to revamp our budget systems to make sure that every tax-payer dollar is not wasted. That is why I fought for zero-based budgeting and better management of the City's liability costs. These government reform efforts will allow us to fund those priorities that we value the most, such as public safety and other vital City services."

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