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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City Council Backs Councilmember Huizar's Resolution to Reform California's Constitution

Resolution makes Los Angeles one of the first cities to support a constitutional convention

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 22, 2009) – A resolution calling for the formation of a civilian commission to overhaul the California Constitution was passed by the Los Angeles City Council Tuesday by a vote of 13-1.

The resolution, authored by Councilmember José Huizar, puts the City of Los Angeles in support of the grassroots effort to call a constitutional convention in 2011 in order to repair and reevaluate the way business is done in Sacramento.

“For too long, partisan politics in Sacramento have caused gridlock and inaction,” said Councilmember Huizar. “By calling a convention, the people of California will ensure that state government starts working for them again. Meanwhile, the people of Los Angeles can no longer sit idly by and watch our City’s valuable resources being stripped away because of the state Legislature’s inability to get its house in order.”

Among the proposals discussed by Repair California, the non-profit group behind the pair of initiatives expected to hit the ballot next November, are removing the two-thirds majority required to pass a budget, streamlining state government by removing redundant boards and commissions, and protecting local government funds from being raided by the state.

Tuesday’s resolution makes Los Angeles the first large city in California to call for reforming the State constitution. In August, the city of Fresno passed a similar resolution.

Repair California will submit ballot language to the Attorney General in early November in anticipation of two initiatives aimed at the 2010 general election ballot. The first allows the people of California to directly call for a constitutional convention through the initiative process and the second would call for the actual convention.

(more)

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Included in today's resolution were additional provisions suggested by City staff and Councilmember Richard Alarcón to condition the City's support for the convention on a serious attempt to follow the federal Voting Rights Act to ensure minority representation. Another provision requests that the initiative backers ensure that the state's largest cities, such as Los Angeles, be able to directly select their convention delegates.

Another issue that the Council sought to see included in the eventual ballot language, is a discussion of education funding and ensuring that the state's neediest schools receive adequate support.

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