

Charter Supporters Say Revised Document Could Keep City Together
By DOMINIC BERBEO, City News Service
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LOS ANGELES (CNS) - Members of the Elected Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission today urged passage of the new document on next Tuesday's ballot as a way to avoid the proposed breakup of the city.

Rob Glushon, a member of the commission that has met hundreds of times over the past two years to revise the city's 75-year-old charter, said the new document takes into account the concerns of secessionists in the San Fernando Valley, San Pedro and other areas.

"This is the last opportunity we have to keep the city together," Glushon said at a news conference outside City Hall.

Janice Hahn, another elected commissioner, said the reason the charter reform process began was because of secession efforts around the city.

"If this effort fails," Hahn said, "many parts of the city will have more reason" to seek secession.

But while Richard Close, chairman of the secession group Valley VOTE, supports the new charter, he has said it will have no effect on the group's drive to break away from the city.

Another charter commissioner, Nick Pacheco, called the recent opposition to the charter from unions that represent city employees "politics as usual."

Pacheco, who is also a City Council candidate in the 14th district, accused council members who oppose the new charter of putting pressure on the unions to fight passage of the measure.

Hahn agreed, saying the council has been "leaning on labor" to oppose the new charter in return for council support in future contract negotiations.

Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg, a pro-union politician who vehemently opposes the new charter, called that claim "ridiculous."

Goldberg said the unions made the decision independently, adding that "one does not lean on the unions, they lean on you."

Goldberg also criticized Mayor Richard Riordan's effort to pass the new

charter, saying the nearly \$1 million raised by a pro-charter campaign he helped organize has come mostly from ``big developers and contractors" interested in easier permit rules.

One of the biggest donors to the pro-charter ``Reform L.A.! Yes on One" campaign was the Los Angeles Business Advisors, a group of top downtown business executives which has contributed \$50,000 of the \$982,000 raised so far, city records show.

Meanwhile, some council members opposing the new charter, including President John Ferraro and members Rita Walters, Hal Bernson and Mike Hernandez, have channeled money to the opposition's modest \$150,000 campaign through their officeholder accounts.

According to a report from the city Ethics Commission, L.A. Taxpayers for Good Government received \$50,000 last week from the ``Ferraro Officeholder Committee."