

# Council OKs unified charter proposal for ballot

By Rick Orlov  
Daily News Staff Writer

Pressured by the elected Charter Reform Commission's power, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously on Tuesday to place a unified proposal before voters on June 13 even as several commissioners vowed to campaign against it.

While elected commission Chairman Erwin Chemerinsky and appointed commission Chairman George Kieffer exulted in the 14-0 vote, council members complained they had little choice because of the ability of the elected commission to place its plan before voters without council approval.

"Two years ago, people would have said it's pie in the sky to think we would have a unified charter with unanimous support from the appointed panel, unanimous support from the elected panel and a unanimous vote from the City Council," Kieffer said. "Yet, that's where we stand today with a broad cross section of business, labor and civic groups supporting us."

However, the support is far from unanimous as a second elected commissioner, Marcos Castaneda, said he would join Commissioner Paula Boland and other city officials in opposing the plan.

"This plan isn't what we were elected to do," Castaneda said. "The people elected us to come up with charter reform, and we have a compromise document with the appointed commission."

Councilman Richard Alatorre, who is retiring this year, said he plans to raise funds to campaign against the proposal for what he sees as reducing the power of the City Council and in its creation of advisory councils for reapportionment.

"This is something I could get motivated about," Alatorre said.

Council members Nate Holden and Rudy Svorinich also voiced their opposition to the plan.

"About 75 percent of what you did is OK," said Holden, who voted against the plan and then switched his vote. "But that other 25 percent. This deserves to go down the tubes. It will go down the tubes."

Svorinich said he felt it weakened

the council too much at the expense of giving greater power to the mayor and would make government more remote from the public.

"For a lot of people, it is the member of the council they turn to."

Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg agreed.

"All you will be asking us to do is put up a sign in our office saying if you have a problem go see the mayor," Goldberg said, adding she has not decided whether she will vote for the ballot measure or campaign against it.

Councilman Hal Bernson, who has chaired the council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for better than a decade, also voiced complaints about its new procedures that could limit appeals to the City Council.

"You are creating a situation where the mayor will become a dictator on land-use issues," said Bernson, who also said he was not sure whether he would support or oppose the measure when it is on the ballot.

Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas, who did not speak either way on the matter, offered his own proposal to have the city create a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to create neighborhood councils if the charter is defeated.

Kieffer said he expected and welcomed some opposition.

"You can't expect to have success unless there is some opposition," he said.

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