

Svorinich, Fiedler to Take Lead in Opposing Charter Reform Arguments

By a NEWSource Staff Writer

Councilman Rudy Svorinich Jr. of San Pedro will coordinate the official ballot opposition to the Unified Charter proposal on the June ballot and will have the help of San Fernando Valley secession advocate and former congresswoman Bobbi Fiedler, city officials said Wednesday.

As expected, Elected Charter Reform Commission Chairman Erwin Chemerinsky and his appointed commission counterpart, George Kieffer, will author the ballot pamphlet arguments in favor of the proposal, council President John Ferraro said at a special Rules and Elections Committee session. Ferraro said he chose Svorinich as principal author since he was the first opponent to put in his name, but others will participate.

Ballot arguments on both sides of up to 1,000 words are due at the City Clerk's Office by 5 p.m. this afternoon.

Fiedler told the NEWSource she wanted to help Svorinich because she strongly opposed the charter as a "big mistake" in local government.

"It takes 63 areas of the existing charter that offer protections and guarantees and moves them to ordinance, where the

City Council has a right to change them on its own," Fiedler said. "I also oppose the gifting of more power to the mayor as a big mistake. I like having the City Council being principally in control, because this is a big city and the council gives everyone more of a voice."

Fiedler said there is not yet any well-organized opposition movement, but that there were many opponents.

"We're just trying to get everyone together right now," Fiedler said.

In addition to the main charter package, voters on June 8 will also face three separate charter items—a portion affecting governance of the Los Angeles Unified School District, which will also go to areas outside of the city of Los Angeles that are in the LAUSD; an amendment that would increase City Council size from 15 to 21; and a second amendment that would increase council size to 25.

Ferraro designated Councilman Hal Bernson to write opposition arguments on the LAUSD measure and Nate Holden to author opposition on the two council expansion items.

Bernson and Holden are up for re-election next month. Svorinich is not.

Some observers of the charter reform process have speculated that the City Council may have presented a more organized opposition if half its members were not running to stay in office.

The council voted unanimously March 2 to put the charter measure on the ballot.

Co-authors may sign on to both pro and con ballot arguments, but their names must also be submitted by 5 p.m. today. Rebuttal arguments of up to 500 words must be submitted by March 25.

The arguments will run only in the city ballot pamphlet, and not in the draft charter that is to be mailed to each voter. City Clerk J. Michael Carey said voters will receive a full charter, condensed to 150 pages in 10-point type with two columns per page. The draft Unified Charter as presented to the clerk last week consists of two volumes totaling about 330 pages.

The current charter is 292 pages, but the type is smaller so length comparisons are not helpful. Charter reform officials say the proposed new document is about two-thirds the length of the present charter.

3-15-99