

Council angers charter panel

By Rick Orlov
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Angered at what they called a double-cross by the Los Angeles City Council, a majority of members of the Elected Charter Reform Commission threatened Tuesday to seek significant limits on council power even if Proposition 1 is approved next week.

"When we were approached by city leaders about developing a unified charter (proposal), many of us were led to believe we would have the support of the City Council. Now these same leaders oppose this," Commissioner Rob Glushon said at a City Hall news conference. Eight other elected commissioners were with him.

"We do feel like we were stabbed in the back. . . . We gave the council everything they wanted when they came to us," he added.

Until one week after the election, the elected commission will retain its legal power to put proposed

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Elected charter commissioners say they were double-crossed

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charter changes on a future ballot — "things like taking redistricting totally out of the council's hands and developing a different approach to neighborhood councils," Glushon said.

Members of the elected commission urged voters to support Proposition 1 on the ballot Tuesday and lambasted the council majority for fighting against charter reform and seeking money from lobbyists for a joint campaign with unions.

Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg denied most council members actually committed themselves to support Proposition 1 during lengthy negotiations with both the elected and the appointed commissions. The commissions jointly drafted the charter-reform proposition in a compromise.

"My concern is there are some nasty little secrets in this that people haven't read and don't realize what will happen," Goldberg said. "There are a lot of good things in this (Proposition 1) and,

if it loses, I know there are eight votes (on the council) to submit some of those to the voters."

Among these would be giving more authority to the controller and increasing the power of the Inspector General's Office in the Los Angeles Police Department, she said.

She said the council should decide which charter-reform proposals go onto a future ballot.

Councilman Joel Wachs, one of three council members who support Proposition 1, said Goldberg and others in the majority were attempting to deceive the public.

"This is — pure and simple — about power," Wachs said. "The council has it and doesn't want to give it up. This is just the arrogance of power at City Hall.

"There is a narrow band of special interests who don't want things to change. They want to take the \$4 billion in city taxes that will be paid this year and determine how it will be spent. It is the City Council. It is the unions. It is the lobbyists, all of whom profit from the way things are today."

Elected Commissioner Janice Hahn said there is another reason to support Proposition 1: the threat of secession.

"People in my area of San Pedro and the San Fernando Valley are looking to break away," Hahn said. "This is the last chance we have to show the city can stay together. People are unhappy with the way the city is being run, and they want to have a voice in how it works.

"We held over 300 public hearings, and we heard the anger of the people about how difficult it is for them to become involved. The charter we have now took effect in 1925 when Los Angeles had 700,000 people. Today, we have 3.5 million people."

Commissioner Richard Macias also took note of the successful efforts of the City Council to get city unions to oppose the charter plan.

"It's just business as usual," Macias said. "The unions have contracts coming up, and they don't want to go against the council."