



May 26, 2021

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

I write in opposition to item #2 which would approve an amendment to the Executive Director's contract to include the responsibilities of demographer/line-drawer. The LAUSD Redistricting Commission ignored the request of over 30 organizations, The LA Times, LA City Council, and the Mayor by hiring a recent city employee as Executive Director.¹ The negative consequences of that vote are now being compounded by this move to increase the responsibilities of the Executive Director. The Commission must reject this item, issue an RFP, and take immediate steps to ensure the Executive Director discloses any and all potential conflict of interests.

Our already tight redistricting schedule has been further condensed due to delayed redistricting data. Once data is released this commission will need an all hands on deck approach to navigate lengthy hearing schedule and line drawing process. By condensing and consolidating responsibilities w/ one person, who can only be in one place at a time, the commission sets itself up for a further strained process later this year.

Even if one person could in theory handle the dual roles proposed, this Executive Director has secured a redistricting contract with Alhambra, is pursuing redistricting clients that include Pasadena, Martinez, and Kerr county as well as joining with former CM Herb Wesson in submitting a proposal to handle cannabis consulting with the City of Hawthorne. The Executive Director was intended to serve full time, and it is becoming unmistakably clear that he is in no way going to be devoting anywhere near his full efforts to this commission. At no point in the 2.5 month tenure of this Executive Director has he brought the Commission into compliance with basic portions of AB 849 related to language

¹ March 10 Public Comment Opposing ED Hiring:
https://ens.lacity.org/cla/agenda_material/claagenda_material3227148673_03102021.pdf

access and transparency. The LA City Council Commission has hired an Outreach Director and Deputy Outreach Director whereas the LAUSD Commission is only just now beginning the process of pursuing an Outreach Director. It's website/materials pale in commission to the city council commission, and it's clear the staff needs more hands on deck not fewer.

The Executive Director has declined to provide transparency w/ the public regarding who his clients are. *If there is any area of the Executive Director's contract that warrants an amendment it's with regards to conflict of interest disclosure.* A recently filed form 700 reveals that his firm is receiving compensation in the range of \$10k-100k from the "Equal Representation Project" a 501c4 that was recently registered by Stephen Kaufman. His firm, Kaufman legal, represents nearly all of our local elected officials and their campaigns along with numerous other special interests.² The Executive Director has also previously served as a pro bono line drawer for the LA Federation of Labor with regards to state redistricting (which would not need to be disclosed in a form 700).³ Given the number of current and future clients involved, the commission should ensure the Executive Director is required to publicly provide information on their clients that may present a conflict of interest and do so on an ongoing basis. The LA City Council Redistricting Commission recently adopted the state commission's disclosure requirements, and this commission should ensure the Executive Director follows the same standard. Those requirements can be found in section 9 of their most recent [RFP](#) on page 28-29, and in a related an [impartiality statement](#).

The issues highlighted are notable, but in the world of redistricting they are to some extent unavoidable. However, they become far more problematic when the Executive Director serves as *both* Executive Director and the Demographer. To be clear, Mr. Westall has unquestionable expertise in this field. A particular thanks is owed to him for leading the effort in city council to address crucial issues like voter turnout and public financing of elections. Without him it is unlikely the council president would have fully appreciated the value of those commitments, or been able to persuade his colleagues to see the light as well.

² This is likely an effort unrelated to redistricting or electoral politics and the scope of Kaufman's involvement beyond registration is not clear. It does however provide a clear example for the need to have increased disclosure beyond that provided in a basic form 700.

³ Again, this is in no way to cast aspersions upon these particular clients, but to illustrate the potential that Mr. Westall might serve in a pro bono capacity for a client and thus circumvent disclosure on a form 700.

The state and country desperately need well qualified demographers like him in a time like this. The issue with Mr. Westall, *here in the City of LA*, is that given his unique pre-existing relationships with elected officials and interests in this city we need to think long and hard before moving forward with this contract amendment.

Sincerely,

Rob Quan