



To: LAUSD Redistricting Commission

Re: LAUSD Redistricting Commission Data and mapping Committee Meeting (05-26-2021):  
Agenda Item #2 (continued discussion on demographer services)

Honorable Commissioners,

Represent Los Angeles-San Gabriel Valley (LA-SGV) is one of many state and local chapters operating under the purview of [Represent.US](https://www.represent.us), a national nonprofit organization that advocates for anti-corruption reforms and good-government practices at the federal, state, and local levels of representation. Our chapter represents hundreds of Angelenos and San Gabriel Valley residents.

We are aware that the Mapping and Data Committee is recommending that the LAUSD Redistricting Commission forgo a Request For Proposals (RFP) for map drawing services and instead award the contract, perhaps through one-on-one negotiations, to a contractor already on the Commission's payroll; in other words, a no-bid contract. As a matter of ethics, Represent LA-SGV objects to such an approach to procurement services. Open bidding is widely accepted as best practice for most public contracts, but it is especially important to employ open and transparent procurement protocols throughout the redistricting process. The value of redistricting is highly contingent upon public trust and participation. The appearance of favoritism or impropriety at any stage of the redistricting process is likely to invoke cynicism and taint the entire process.

Therefore, as matters of principle and best practice, the LAUSD Redistricting Commission should send its contract for a demographer out to bid. Additionally, all RFPs for Commission work should have strong conflict of interest language within them. These are not tall orders for a process that establishes boundaries for democratic representation for the next ten years.

Cost savings and Commission familiarity with the service provider in question were invoked at the May 12, 2021 Commission meeting as justification for forgoing the RFP process in this instance. While these are legitimate considerations when determining who should receive the contract, they are not the only considerations, nor should they preclude the use of an RFP. The contractor the Commission has in mind may submit an application via the RFP process just like all potential applicants (contingent upon any conflicts of interest). Additionally, Represent LA-SGV takes issue with a cost-savings rationale to the RFP process for the following reasons: 1) the cost of the RFP process should already be accounted for within the Commission's budget, but even if it is not, Represent LA-SGV does not believe costs trump ethics; 2) forgoing an open and transparent RFP process deprives the public of its right to weigh in on the applicants and the process; and 3) selective use of procurement protocols is a slippery slope that establishes poor precedent moving forward.

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For these reasons, Represent LA-SGV urges the LAUSD Redistricting Commission to obtain its demographer — and all other contractual services — through an RFP process that establishes conflict of interest standards and is open and transparent to all.

Sincerely,  
Sean McMorris  
President, Represent.US: Los Angeles-San Gabriel Valley Chapter