



To: Members of the Sacramento City Council

As most of you know, the League of Women Voters of Sacramento County conducted a study of the different forms of city governance. On the basis of that study, we opposed the previous strong-mayor proposal, "Sacramento Checks and Balances Act of 2014."

Our position on city governance states, in part, that "Sacramento as a city of neighborhoods is better suited for a collaborative council-manager form of government" and "it is reasonable for a city to change its form of government only when there is a clear body of evidence that such change will address demonstrated problems."

We have reviewed the current proposal and listened to Mayor Steinberg make the case for his proposal to our board of directors, and we find no evidence that this major change in the form of city governance would address demonstrated problems facing the city.

The residents of Sacramento have spoken forcefully in support of change to improve the health, well-being and safety of their neighborhoods. The COVID-19 crisis, along with its consequential economic impacts, have magnified the inequities in the city's neighborhoods and must be addressed; however, a "strong mayor" is not the answer.

We support the racial and gender equity goals, inclusive economic development, participatory budgeting, and an empowered ethics commission offered in the proposal to various groups; however, changing the city's charter and governance structure is not necessary to achieve these goals.

We call on you to listen to the people of Sacramento, use your power as elected officials, and work collaboratively for the good of the entire city and its people.

A strong-mayor system would significantly weaken your power and, by extension, the voice of residents in your district that elected you and deserve your representation.

We see no compelling reason to turn over decision making and line-item veto power to one person, unknown in the future, to manage in private. This is the opposite of accountability and transparency.

Finally, your vote to put a measure this significant and controversial on the ballot less than 90 days before ballots go out—without time for proper vetting and in the middle of a pandemic—can surely seed more cynicism about elected leadership.

There is no urgency to add this to the ballot and have this "political fight" while people in the city are fighting for their lives, their jobs, their homes and their kids' education. We urge you to vote NO.

Respectfully,

Suzi Bakker
President, League of Women Voters of Sacramento County

"The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time." The late Rep. John Lewis