



Reimagine LA County Initiative

This week, the Board approved the final reading of the Reimagine LA County Initiative, which will place a charter amendment on the ballot in November, asking the voters to ratify our decision to direct a minimum of 10% of our locally generated unrestricted funding to a range of community services.

Racial inequity in our custody system is extreme and unjustifiable. The outdated and punitive uses of law enforcement to cure social ills are not working. In most cases, they are only perpetuating a cycle of incarceration that destroys families and fractures communities. Investments in preventative measures and community services like housing, treatment, and diversion, can revitalize underserved communities and lead to a safer LA County for all.

The Charter amendment is one tool to help make the long-term budget adjustments needed to bring the County's spending into alignment with our actions over the last few years. Ultimately, the voters will have the chance to make their voices heard in November.

Data Collection & Transparency in Justice

As LA County embarks on several ambitious justice reforms, it is important to guarantee that policies are data-driven, and that the public has access to that data. This week, the Board passed two motions that support these goals.

The first motion, which I co-authored with Supervisor Hilda Solis, deals with data collection to inform our policies on pre-trial reform. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, jail populations were reduced to help slow the spread. Many of those released, about 2,000 were pre-trial and had not yet been convicted. By collecting data on this population, we'll hopefully learn about whether people were successful on release and what services or support helped them. This will help us make decisions as we continue to examine reforms to the cash bail system and the adoption of alternative risk assessment measures.

The Board also passed a motion I co-authored with Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas that includes a short-term plan to publish existing data in an accessible format, and a long-term plan to collect more comprehensive data and make it available on the County's Open Data Portal.

Publicly accessible data allows our community members to participate in crafting policies that are demonstrably responsive to needs, and it helps the Board to make informed and cost-effective policy decisions. Furthermore, in a time of extreme polarization, data transparency can unify, bringing everyone to the table to collectively understand the challenges and evaluate the solutions.

Changes for the November 2020 Election

The importance of the upcoming election, and the unprecedented circumstances in which it is occurring, cannot be overstated. I am pleased that the Board passed a motion I co-authored with Supervisor Janice Hahn that makes some practical changes in response to the pandemic, and lessons learned.

In the March 2020 election, we found that over 94% of people who chose to vote in person did so in the last four days of the election period (including election day). Given this information, it makes sense to shorten the voting period from 11 days to 5 days for a few reasons. By reducing the number of days, we are minimizing the health risk and the burden on vote center hosts, and the shorter time commitment will allow more locations to open their doors as vote centers.

Another lesson learned from the March election was the need for appropriate training for vote center staff and ensuring there were enough staffers. County Disaster Service Workers are uniquely positioned to fill this short, time-bound service role. Utilizing County staff ensures that we will have sufficient staffing at election sites and that they will be well-trained and familiar with how to follow health officer orders. Of course, community volunteers are still welcomed and appreciated!

Eviction Defense Program & West LA Courthouse

LA County continues to focus on a range of strategies, from prevention to building housing, to fight homelessness.

Sadly, people can lose their homes simply because they do not know their rights, or cannot afford the legal representation to stand up to their landlord. To help prevent evictions, the Board passed a motion I co-authored with Mark Ridley-Thomas that allocates \$8.7 million towards the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs' Eviction Defense Program. This money will fund the second phase of the program, including rental assistance and full-scope legal representation as DCBA partners with the Legal Aid Foundation.

We also passed my motion extending our lease of the West LA Courthouse and extending the Request for Proposal deadline (for the redevelopment of the West LA Civic Center property) until September. This extension will allow us to select a developer that will help realize the City and County's vision of a new development that includes affordable housing and community-serving space.

LA County Immigrants Count: Census 2020

Last month, President Trump unveiled his latest attempt to exclude immigrants and affect the allocation of resources by releasing a memo stating it will be federal policy to exclude undocumented immigrants from the population count used to apportion congressional representatives.

Point blank: This is an attempt to divert funding and representation from diverse regions like LA County. At this week's Board meeting, we passed a motion I co-authored with Supervisor Hilda Solis allowing LA County Counsel to join litigation opposing this blatantly unconstitutional action. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is explicit, the Census counts all persons, and the president has no authority to change that.

LA County is home to more than 3 million immigrants, and proudly so. We must not allow President Trump's racist and xenophobic agenda to interfere with a complete and accurate count.