



January 7, 2014

Los Angeles City Ethics Commission
200 North Spring Street
City Hall, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: Request for Comments on Campaign Finance Laws

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles thanks the Commission for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation of feedback regarding the City's campaign finance laws (<http://ethics.lacity.org/pdf/notices/campaginfinancecomments.pdf>)

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles supports Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), also known as Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), for single-winner elections in the City of Los Angeles. If enacted, IRV would act synergistically with Los Angeles' campaign finance laws, particularly the matching funds program, to promote fairer elections. The League supports the matching funds program to the full extent allowed by law.

Instant runoff elections encourage challengers to run and have their voices heard. With IRV, voters will be less likely to stop paying attention after they have chosen a candidate, because their second and lower choices will remain relevant to the election result. Because the matching funds program aims to increase voter attention, instant runoff elections would complement the Ethics Commission's efforts in this area.

Since primary elections are unnecessary when using IRV, switching to IRV would allow a stronger matching funds program as matching funds are expended on one election rather than two. One election per cycle rather than two would also enable the Commission to pursue enforcement more effectively with the same budget. In addition, IRV would reduce the city's cost of administering elections and would alleviate pressure on campaign donors.

Most importantly, instant runoff elections advance the values of fairness and freedom of expression. These values are implicit in campaign finance law.

The merits of IRV have come up in Commission discussions in the past. We believe that the Ethics Commission could lead the way in supporting this concept for Los Angeles City elections.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Elizabeth Ralston in blue ink.

Handwritten signature of Sandra Trutt in blue ink.

Elizabeth Ralston, Co-President Sandra Trutt, Co-President
League of Women Voters of Los Angeles