

Notice of Intent to Circulate Petition

Notice is hereby given by the person whose name appears hereon of their intention to circulate a petition within the City of Berkeley for the purpose of amending Section 9, Article V of the Charter of the City of Berkeley to establish a Citizens Redistricting Commission who will be charged with adjusting Council District boundaries following the 2014 General Municipal Election, and every ten years following the decennial census to equalize population in each of the districts.

A statement of the reasons of the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows:

Currently the Berkeley City Charter give the City Council the sole authority to draw new Council District boundaries to be consistent with legal requirements, including the requirement that all districts be as nearly equal in population as may be.

When District Elections were established by the voters in 1986, specific boundaries were put into the City Charter. All subsequent redistricting could not substantially deviate from those boundaries. In 2012, the City Council placed Measure R on the November ballot, which amended the Charter to remove fixed district boundaries. The stated purpose of Measure R was to remove outdated lines, and give the City Council the flexibility to draw boundaries that reflect changes in population and protect communities of interest.

Despite this mandate of drawing boundaries in a fair way and protecting communities of interest, the City Council in December 2013 adopted a controversial map which needlessly divided students and neighborhoods throughout our city, and was drawn for the main purpose of political advantage.

On two separate occasions during the last ten years, a City Council majority has adopted a controversial redistricting plan that unfairly divided the city, and was ultimately the subject of a citizens referendum.

There is a clear conflict of interest in giving the City Council the sole power to draw its own electoral boundaries. Redistricting becomes more about political gain than about uniting the community. We have seen serious abuses of the redistricting process in states throughout the country where lines are drawn solely for the purpose of partisan political advantage and to discriminate against incumbents, political parties and communities of interest.

In 2008, California voters adopted Proposition 11 which established an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission for state legislative redistricting. The measure was designed to correct decades of partisan gerrymandering, and put the power back in the hands of the people. The process has been successful in drawing impartial district boundaries free of political considerations.

Unfortunately Berkeley's redistricting process is broken and the only way to fix it is by taking the power to draw district lines out of the hands of the Council. This Charter Amendment would establish a Citizens Redistricting Commission, which would be required to draw new district boundaries following the adoption of this initiative in the 2014 General Municipal Election, and every ten years thereafter following the federal decennial census. The independent Citizens Redistricting Commission will be insulated from political influence, represent the diversity of the

community, and develop lines based on objective criteria that are also not bound by incumbency. The map adopted by the Commission would be final and could not be amended by the Council.

By creating an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission we can restore integrity and trust in the redistricting process, and create truly independent lines that unite neighborhoods throughout the city and empower citizens to have their voice heard.

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*Title for Identification Purposes Only