

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 974-1491

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Executive Secretary

October 8, 1974

Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383, Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: CORRECTING THE PROBLEMS IN THE PRESENT  
CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

At the meeting on August 6 the Board of Supervisors requested the Economy and Efficiency Commission to conduct a study on all commissions and committees in the County and report back its findings to the Board. This assignment included the Civil Service Commission.

TREASURER-TAX COLLECTOR EXAMINATION

Together with the Board of Supervisors, we have been shocked and concerned over the recent disclosures of alleged favoritism and misconduct in the examination for the Treasurer-Tax collector. It is unfortunate, in view of the series of crises and scandals which have erupted in the County in the past year, that still another possible scandal involving serious, if not criminal, misconduct has been exposed in the operation of the County's Civil Service System. Certainly, at the very least, the evidence presented to date severely tarnishes the County's reputation in one of the most prestigious and inviolate areas of County government.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

We believe, however, that the Board of Supervisors has an excellent opportunity to take constructive action on this problem in addition to the action you have already taken in asking for a full investigation by the Grand Jury. We believe the action which we recommend will diminish considerably any criticism that will probably be directed at the County when the Grand Jury brings in its report.

Our recommendation is that the Board of Supervisors reconsider its previous action concerning our report on "Civil Service and Collective Bargaining in Los Angeles County Government" submitted to the Board in August of this year. One of its principal recommendations proposed a Charter amendment that would combine the Civil Service Commission and the Employee Relations Commission into a single commission of five members to be called the Civil Service and Employee Relations Commission. In particular, we emphasized that the amendment would require that "the members of this commission will be appointed in a manner which will insure as much as possible that they have the necessary expertise in the field of employer-employee relations and have a demonstrated record of impartiality and integrity in this field."

We further recommended that specific procedures for appointment to the combined commission be prescribed in the Employee Relations Ordinance. These included a joint labor-management committee to review and nominate potential candidates for final approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The primary purpose of these recommendations was to insure that responsible, knowledgeable, and impartial experts be appointed to the new commission. The report concluded, "This requirement should guarantee - as

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much as it is possible to guarantee through legal means - that the commission will operate in a responsible and appropriate manner."

We wish to emphasize that no similar requirements or safeguards currently exist in the Charter to insure that the members of the Civil Service Commission possess the necessary expertise, impartiality, and integrity in discharging their responsibilities to the taxpayers of the County of Los Angeles, to the employees of the County, and to the executives of the County, including the Board of Supervisors. Under the present Charter, absolutely no qualifications are required for appointment to the Civil Service Commission. It is quite possible that the lack of such requirements is a major cause for the current problems involving the Civil Service Commission.

At the time that the chairman of our commission presented the report to you at the meeting on August 6, he outlined other very strong advantages in combining the two commissions, namely, that our recommendations would establish an employer-employee relations program that would preserve the merit principle and at the same time provide for a balanced and equitable system of collective bargaining and bilateral decision-making.

You took no action on our report except to receive and file it. However, you instructed the County Counsel "to prepare appropriate amendments to the Employee Relations Ordinance which will resolve the conflicts between the Civil Service Commission and the Employee Relations Commission insofar as possible without a Charter change including the Aaron Committee recommendations." Previous to August 6 it was our understanding from the ruling by the County Counsel that no effective change resolving the conflict of jurisdiction between the two commissions could be made without amending the Charter, and we pointed this out at the August 6 meeting.

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We recommend strongly, therefore, that you reconsider your action and review again our recommendation for a combined commission.

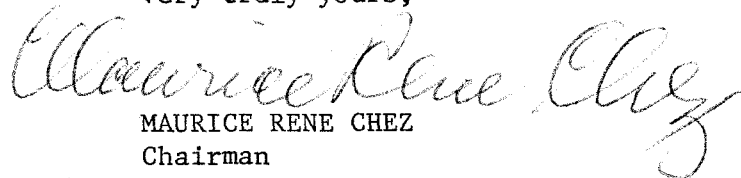
PLACEMENT ON THE BALLOT

While it is true that the deadline has passed for placing the proposed Charter amendment on the November 5th ballot, we believe your Board should reopen this subject for possible placement on the ballot in the June or November elections of 1976 - or in a special election if one occurs before that time.

Two years can pass quickly and if the Board's position is established and affirmed soon, the opportunity to educate the public and the probability of success in the coming election will be greatly enhanced.

We urge you to take this constructive action. Simply replacing a Civil Service Commissioner and readjusting a few rules in the examination process will not correct the problems deeply ingrained in the present system. Only a thorough overhaul of the Civil Service System can insure that such incidents as that which occurred in the examination for Treasurer-Tax Collector will not happen again.

Very truly yours,

  
MAURICE RENE CHEZ  
Chairman

MRC:jmj