

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
AND SHEILA KUEHL**

**OCTOBER 13, 2020**

**SUPPORT FOR THE 2019-2020 GIRLS BUILD LOS ANGELES INITIATIVE**

Voting is the cornerstone of American democracy. Through voting and political participation, residents communicate their interests, preferences, and needs and generate pressure for elected officials to respond. As the 2020 United States presidential election approaches against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuing economic recession and national reckoning with structural racism, voter suppression and access remain a looming concern for communities of color. Black and Latinx voters, particularly, face a litany of obstacles to voting. Reduced polling places, longer lines and wait times, all of which defined Georgia’s primary elections, have significant implications on the quality and inclusivity of American democracy.

Despite the threat of COVID-19, voter turnout in 2020 is expected to reach the highest levels in decades, with a surge of new voters producing the most diverse electorate in American history. Current voter registration data shows an increase in registrations from young people and people of color across the United States. This year, California registered a record high of 21 million voters, the highest rate of registration since the election of 1940. Young voters represent almost 40% of total registrants in California and nearly two-thirds of new registrations are by those born after 1996. The

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MOTION

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continued push for voter registration remains critical this year to ensure every eligible voter can vote in this election without undue complication.

To support this effort, the LA Promise Fund will embark on the sixth year of its “Girls Build” initiative which challenges young women from public middle and high schools across Los Angeles County (County) to join together to address disparities in their communities and effect social change. This year, there will be a special focus on voter mobilization. In partnership with the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization [When We All Vote](#), the LA Promise Fund will build a coalition of 10,000 young women of color to register and pre-register themselves and 10,000 additional members of their families, schools and communities across Southern California and throughout the nation.

To date, more than 50,000 girls have participated in Girls Build events, including field trips, film premieres, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics-related career events, and annual summits, which convene thousands of girls around the theme of women’s empowerment. This year’s annual Girls Build Summit will be held virtually on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Summit will feature an inspiring lineup of speakers and celebrate the civic engagement efforts of participants in the Voter Mobilization Challenge.

Since 2015, the County has proclaimed October as Girls’ Empowerment Month. Given the significant impact the Girls Build initiative has had on the students who participated, as well as on their peers, families, schools, and communities, the County should once again provide its support.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

- 1) Proclaim the month of October 2020 as Girls Empowerment Month throughout the County of Los Angeles (County);
- 2) Encourage all County employees and residents to learn more about Girls Build by visiting <http://www.lapromisefund.org/girls-build>; and

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- 3) Encourage all County employees and residents to register to vote and consider volunteering to register others to vote by visiting <http://lavote.net> and <http://whenweallvote.org>.

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(PC/EW)