

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

MARCH 31, 2009

The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Semi-Final Official Election Returns reports that just over 6 percent or 23,631 of the 390,409 registered voters participated in the Special Primary Election held on Tuesday, March 24 to fill the vacant 26th Senate District seat.

The cost to taxpayers to administer this election is estimated at \$2.2 million by the Registrar-Recorder. In the event the highest vote getter wins the General Election scheduled on May 19, his victory will create another vacancy in a legislative seat and precipitate at least one more Special Election.

In a republic, citizens deserve to be represented by the candidate of their choice in elections that are administered freely and fairly. Vacancies in offices should be filled in a timely and efficient manner to ensure that all citizens are fully represented in their legislative bodies. However, numerous elections (both scheduled and special) can contribute to voter fatigue and lead to lower voter participation. By May 19, many

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MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

ANTONOVICH _____

KNABE _____

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citizens in the Second Supervisorial District will have had the opportunity to participate in as many as six elections since January 2008.

Low voter turnout is antithetical to representative government and is ultimately corrosive to a vibrant, participatory democracy. Different election systems such as ranked voter preference combined with the deployment of modern technology currently available may be able to address the issues of election fatigue, cost and low voter turnout in a manner that reinforces democratic participation.

I, therefore move, that the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer and County Counsel, and others deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer, report to the Board at the meeting of the Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2009 on:

- 1.) costs to the County associated with Special Elections to fill vacant partisan and non-partisan, local government, legislative and congressional seats over the past decade;
- 2.) efforts being made by the Registrar-Recorder and other jurisdictions to make elections more cost-effective and participatory;
- 3.) efforts being made by the Registrar-Recorder and other jurisdictions to encourage voter participation and turnout; and,

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- 4.) options, including but not limited to Instant Run-off Voting, available to the Board and/or recommendations for legislative proposals to reduce election costs and voter fatigue with their estimated implementation costs and potential savings.

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