



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Fifth District

September 25, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Dean C. Logan
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLLWORKER STIPENDS

During the Public Comment portion of the July 21, 2015, Board of Supervisors meeting, Mr. Steve Petzold raised concerns during his testimony related to the impact of the Los Angeles County's minimum wage increase on election Pollworkers. In response to those concerns, Supervisor Antonovich requested the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) to report back to the Board.

Pollworkers are volunteers that are paid a stipend to cover their incidental expenses for providing services to voters at designated polling locations throughout the County. Currently, L.A. County's Pollworker stipend is \$100 for an Inspector and \$80 for a Clerk. These rates have been in effect since June 2006, when a stipend increase was implemented based on a comparison study of other counties within California. Based on that study, a \$25 increase for Inspectors and Clerks was approved by the Board, increasing the stipend from \$75 to \$100 for Inspectors and from \$55 to \$80 for Clerks.

While we recognize that stipends are not employee wages and, therefore, not aligned to minimum wage adjustments, we agree the current stipend rates are due for review. Therefore, a cost analysis was prepared based on current Pollworker stipends of comparable counties within the State.

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IMPACT ANALYSIS

A Pollworker stipend comparison of 14 other counties in California shows L.A. County's Inspector stipend of \$100 as the lowest, alongside Orange County. In contrast, Contra Costa County has the highest Inspector stipend of \$230. Additionally, L.A. County's Clerk stipend of \$80 ranks second to lowest after Orange County's stipend of \$75. Conversely, San Joaquin County has the highest Clerk stipend of \$130.

As was done for the previous Pollworker stipend increase, a cost analysis was prepared based on Pollworker stipends of comparable jurisdictions. The average Inspector stipend of three large counties (Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego) was calculated at \$150. Furthermore, the City of Long Beach has an Inspector stipend of \$150 and a Clerk stipend of \$100; and the City of Los Angeles has an Inspector stipend of \$100 and a Clerk stipend of \$80. Based on our analysis of other county and city stipends, we believe the following increases are reasonable:

- All Inspector stipends from \$100 to \$150
- All Clerk stipends from \$80 to \$100

Cost Impact

Based on the above rate changes, the estimated impact on net County cost (NCC) to increase stipends would be approximately \$598,000 for a Primary election and \$524,000 for a General Election. The total cost to conduct Primary and General elections are partially offset by participating jurisdictions; however, the County absorbs costs to conduct unfunded Federal, State, and County elections. Therefore, the unfunded portion of the stipend increase will require NCC of \$598,000 for a Primary election and \$524,000 for a General election. There would be no additional NCC requirement to increase stipends for a consolidated election as stipend costs are 100% reimbursed by the participating jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION

RR/CC believes the stipend amounts based on the survey data would provide assistance to remain competitive with other counties and local cities and that an increase may assist with the increasingly difficult task of recruiting election Pollworkers, especially in June primaries. CEO concurs and believes that the proposed increases are reasonable. RR/CC recommends implementing the stipend increases effective for the June 2016 Primary; which may require additional funding in the current Fiscal Year.

Due to reduced collections associated with the volatile real estate market, the County has already committed additional funding in FY 2015-16 to the RR/CC to ensure the Department's core missions are met. In addition, CEO indicates there are a number of other high County priorities that will require funding from our limited resources.

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Therefore, CEO does not recommend the stipend increase at this time and recommends reconsideration during deliberations for the 2016-17 budget cycle based on further stabilization of real estate transaction revenue and as the County's revenue outlook further improves.

If you have any questions or require further information on this matter, please feel free to contact Dean Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, at (562) 462-2716.

SAH:DL:JJ
SK:JY:ef

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisor
County Counsel
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk