

MOTION

The Neighborhood Council system was established in 1999 to connect LA's diverse communities to City Hall. Neighborhood Council board members are volunteers, elected to office by the members of their community, with the purpose of ensuring that the diverse voices from every neighborhood are heard by City Hall. Democracy cannot exist without a fair electoral process at every level of government. As the closest form of government to the people, Neighborhood Councils must ensure their elections are inclusive, accessible and transparent.

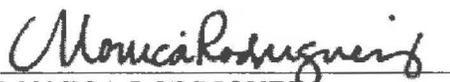
Today, the City of Los Angeles is home to 99 Neighborhood Councils, each with its own election process. Where a person lives in the city determines the inclusivity of the process to cast a ballot, including whether photo identification is required. Requiring photo identification to vote, although seemingly unobstructive, is voter suppression, as many have experienced during the current Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council election. Obtaining identification is a significant burden for many groups as IDs can be costly and the travel required is often an obstacle for people with disabilities, the elderly, and people living in rural areas.

As voter suppression efforts take root across the United States, it is even more important that the City of Los Angeles reconfirms our commitment to voter rights, and equal and consistent elections throughout the neighborhood council system, ensuring that everyone who wants to participate in this grassroots democracy, is provided the same opportunity as their neighbors in other communities.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment be instructed to report with a survey of Neighborhood Council Election rules, with an analysis on how the bylaws of different Neighborhood Councils vary on election issues, including, but not limited to: eligibility requirements for Board seats, governing board structure, stakeholder requirements, and stakeholder verification.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Attorney be requested to report on the City Council's authority to standardize election rules across Neighborhood Councils, and potential limits to this authority.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Clerk be directed to report on the costs associated with administering the existing nonstandardized Neighborhood Council election systems, and provide recommendations for streamlining a Neighborhood Council elections, and potential cost savings that could result from standardizing Neighborhood Council election rules.

PRESENTED BY: 
 MONICA RODRIGUEZ
 Councilwoman, 7th District

SECONDED BY: 


 APR 14 2021