

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Angelenos, like citizens across the United States, are reeling from a continuing economic crisis that threatens our fiscal stability and our quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Americans must resolve some of the divisive economic and social realities facing our nation in a peaceful way to avoid the further deterioration of our greatest asset -our human capital-and;

WHEREAS, the protest in Liberty Plaza called "Occupy Wall Street" released its first official Resolution on September 30th, 2011, available at <http://occupywallst.org/forum/first-official-release-from-occupy-wall-street/>, providing an overview of the goals and unifying principles of the "Occupy" movement; and

WHEREAS, the "Occupy" demonstrations are a rapidly growing movement with the shared goal of urging U.S. citizens to peaceably assemble and occupy public space in order to create a shared dialogue by which to address the problems and generate solutions for economically distressed Americans; and

WHEREAS, "Occupy Los Angeles", currently a peaceful protest movement on the lawn of the Los Angeles City Hall, is fueled by Angelenos from all walks of life who have come together in a demonstration of solidarity with and support for the national movement started by the "Occupy Wall Street"; and

WHEREAS, over 125 additional "Occupy" protests have taken root across the Country, from large demonstrations in Boston and San Francisco, to dozens of smaller ones in between, with many more being planned every hour, including a large-scale "Occupy Colleges" movement set to begin at 12 noon on October 12th, 2011 on college campuses across the United States; and

WHEREAS, the causes and consequences of the economic crisis are eroding the very social contract upon which the Constitution that the United States of America was founded; namely, the ability of Americans to come together and form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense of, promote the general welfare of, and secure the blessings of liberty for all, allowing every American to strive for and share in the prosperity of our nation through cooperation and hard work; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court's recent 5-4 ruling in Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission rolled back legal restrictions on corporate spending in the electoral process, consequently influencing the selection of candidates, the outcome of elections, and policy decisions -- threatening the voices of the people; and

WHEREAS, the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 in 1999 planted seeds for the unsound financial practices that lead to the current economic crisis; and

WHEREAS, corporations hold undue influence and power in our country, and the key to this power is the corporate claim to "personhood," an opinion both U.S. Supreme Court Justices Hugo Black and William O. Douglas declared should be reversed; and

WHEREAS, the current federal and local tax structure unjustly favors large corporations who thereby proportionally pay less in taxes than an average citizen; and

WHEREAS, according to the Institute for Policy Studies report entitled '[Executive Excess 2011](#)', CEOs of top corporations in the S&P 500 realized an average increase in their salaries of 27.8% over the past year. The ratio of CEO to average worker pay over the last year is estimated to be 325-to-1; and

WHEREAS, unrestricted lobbying practices and continued undue influence from special interest groups continue to undermine the election process thereby resulting in laws and ordinances unjustly favoring a few and not the many; and

WHEREAS, the 400 richest Americans at the top control more wealth than the 180 million Americans at the bottom; and

WHEREAS, the Institute for Policy Studies indicates that the top 1 percent of Americans own more than half of the country's stocks, bonds and mutual funds; and

WHEREAS, over the past 30 years, both the average and the median wage in America has remained almost stagnant while the average individual worker contribution to GDP has soared to 59% and the economy has doubled, all after adjusting for inflation; and

WHEREAS, over the past 30 years, almost all the gains to the economy have accrued to the very top income earners—largely the top 1%, who now control 40% of the wealth in the United States, in great part as a result of policy changes that are reversible such as taxation; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released a "[CDC Health Disparities & Inequalities Report—United States, 2011](#)" revealing that income inequality in the United States is the highest in the world among any advanced industrialized nation, with wide-spread inequities in U.S. health outcomes by income, race, and gender; and

WHEREAS, our economic system can only be called broken when over 25 million Americans who seek work are unemployed; more than 50 million Americans are forced to live without health insurance; and, using our current poverty measurement, that is widely recognized to be inadequate and outdated, shows more than 1 in 5 American children are growing up poor in households that lack access to resources that provide basic survival needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is the Capital of Unemployment, with fully [11.7% of its workforce sitting idle](#), a rate that is 44% higher than [the national 8.8% rate of unemployment](#). This number does not include those who are under-employed, have left the workforce or are undocumented. This situation is compounded by the City of LA's poverty rate of [19.1%, which is 44.7% higher than the California poverty rate of 13.2%](#).

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is the Capital of Homelessness, with fully 6% of its population without a home. [LA's homeless population of 23,539](#) includes 8,131 Veterans, an increase of 9% over the last two years. African Americans represent just 9.6% of LA's population but make up fully 43.7% of LA's chronic homeless population.

[The City of LA's population of 3,792,621](#) is just 1.2% of [the total American population of 308,745,538](#) yet its homeless population is fully 3.6% of [the national homeless population of 649,917](#), fully three times the rate of homelessness as the rest of the country.

WHEREAS, the fiscal impact of the continuing economic crisis is disastrous to education, public services, infrastructure and essential safety-net services that have historically made America successful, with school class sizes growing while teachers are laid off and forcing Cities and States to cut hours and services from public safety provision, delaying or neglecting to maintain essential physical infrastructure including roads, sewers, and water and power delivery; and cutting services provided by our libraries, recreation, and park facilities; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is the Capital of Collapsing Infrastructure, [leading the nation with fully 64% of its major streets in poor condition against a national average of 23%](#). This failure is complemented by [10,000 miles of sidewalks that are a full generation behind in repairs](#), resulting in nearly half of LA's sidewalks [in need of repair with a projected price of \\$1.2 billion](#). This situation has resulted in debate over responsibility and [an American with Disabilities Act class action lawsuit filed against the City of Los Angeles](#).

Adding to the threat of collapse is LA's sewer system, [on the one hand an engineering accomplishment](#), on the other hand [a neglected network of 6,700 miles of sewage pipes, nearly a third of them more than 80 years old](#).

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is the Capital of Dwindling City Services, currently enjoying the largest municipal operating budget in its history, [one that actually increased by 1% over last year and now exceeds \\$7 billion](#), yet is referred to as the budget that requires the citywide reduction in city services.

Mayor Villaraigosa presented the 2011-2012 budget as a response to ["the most difficult financial circumstances in generations"](#) and claimed that the budget addresses more than \$1 billion in budget deficits, [reduces the workforce by more than 4,000 positions](#), and stabilizes revenues. He went on to cut the Police Department by \$100 million,

the Fire Department by \$50 million, and surviving City Departments by an average of 10% while eliminating positions and [implementing cost-recovery mandates](#) that result in the restricted delivery of city services to those who can afford to pay for them.

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is the Capital of Home foreclosures, with [one in every 293 housing units receiving a foreclosure notice in 2011](#). [Five states account for 53%](#) of the US foreclosure activity and of those states, California leads the pack and continues to show increases in default notices.

The recent increase in new foreclosure actions is attributed to the prior slowdown as a result of robo-signing and other documentation problems, [a situation that foreshadows more bank repossessions in the coming months as the default process picks up](#).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the Pico Neighborhood Council hereby stands in SUPPORT for the continuation of the peaceful and vibrant exercise in First Amendment Rights carried out by "Occupy Los Angeles" and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Pico Neighborhood Council calls for the City of Los Angeles to conduct its municipal elections according to "clean money" principles of public funded elections that forbid the participation and funding of special interests and corporate entities and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Pico Neighborhood Council calls for the City of Los Angeles to exclude lobbyists and special interests from the legislative process, ensuring that developers are prevented from writing their own planning reports, corporations are not writing their own municipal code, and private interests are not directing city staff and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Pico Neighborhood Council calls for the City of Los Angeles to balance its commitment to Public Safety with a commitment to Public Works, Public Health, and Public Education, ensuring that the City's budget is balanced honestly and without breaking the backs of the residents who can afford it the least and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Pico Neighborhood Council calls for the City of Los Angeles to balance its budget through an honest and transparent audit process of the entire city structure, including the proprietary departments, the charter Departments and the Ordinance Departments, regardless of whether the money is special funding or general funding, regardless of the source and the obligations, that the City of LA account for its assets, its infrastructure, its debts and obligations, and its commitment to the delivery of City Services and,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Pico Neighborhood Council calls on the City of Los Angeles to address the faltering local economy by committing to supporting local businesses with city contracts, with a streamlined bureaucracy, and with a local workforce that is educated and trained and ready to participate in our revitalized local economy.