

10AM PT — March 24 — City Council Meeting
Los Angeles for Democracy Vouchers Motion Talking Points
[Meeting Agenda](#)

General Public Comment Instructions

(Comment will also be taken in person)

If you're joining by phone:

- Call 1-669-254-5252 and use Meeting ID No.160 535 8466, & then press #
- Press # again when prompted for participant ID.
 - Once admitted into the meeting press *9 to get in the line to speak
- When it is your turn to speak an automated voice will ask you to unmute by pressing *6.
 - If you do not unmute the clerk will read the last four digits of your phone number and ask you to press *6.
- State your name, and that you would like to give "General Public Comment":
 - You will have one minute to speak.

If you're joining in-person:

- City Hall is located at 200 N Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90012; and Council chambers is on the third floor.
- If you're driving, there's affordable parking at the Aiso Parking Garage (101 Judge John Aiso St, Los Angeles, CA 90012), two blocks from City Hall.
- If you're taking the metro, Civic Ctr / Grand Park Station — B (Red) and D (Purple) Lines — & Union Station — B (Red), D (Purple), and L (Gold) Lines, are a 5-15 minute walk.

Los Angeles for Democracy Vouchers Talking Points

- **[CONFIRMED CO-PRESENTERS]** Thank you Councilmember Nithya Raman and Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez for your leadership co-presenting this motion to study the feasibility of establishing a Democracy Vouchers program in Los Angeles City.
- **[CONFIRMED SECONDERS]** Thank you Councilmember Katy Young Yaroslavsky, Councilmember Traci Park, and Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez for seconding this motion.
- Los Angeles needs leadership that empowers Angelenos—and not big-money

- Over the last ten years, Los Angeles has been plagued by scandals, many of which involved public officials using their positions to curry political favors and leverage political donations from big-money donors.
 - With record levels of spending in our local elections, the problem of big-money donors in our city's politics hasn't gone away. Data from the Ethics Commission show that campaign donations in 2020 and 2022 overwhelmingly come from a few wealthy donors, people outside Los Angeles, and wealthier, whiter neighborhoods.
 - With LA's political system out of balance, Los Angeles needs to consider expanding its public financing system to empower more people to participate in our democracy, regardless of economic status.
- **A democracy vouchers program would empower everyday Angelenos to participate in the campaign finance system**
 - Democracy voucher programs provide vouchers to eligible residents that can be used to donate to one or multiple candidates for city office.
 - With democracy vouchers, community members don't need disposable income out of their own pocket to contribute to local campaigns. This helps ensure that their voices are heard and the donor pool is representative of our city.
 - Democracy voucher programs have been shown to increase and diversify the candidate pool, and empower candidates who choose to opt-in to the program to run competitive campaigns with the support of many small donors—rather than a few big ones.
 - As an optional program, the city can set special conditions for participating candidates, such as lower spending or contribution limits and requiring public debates.
- **In Seattle, where a democracy vouchers program has been in place since 2017, vouchers have helped build a more equitable and representative democracy**
 - Prior to democracy vouchers, one of the best predictors of who would be a cash donor was whether or not someone lived in a house with a view of the water. Today, that is no longer true — donors are more diverse along lines of race, income, age, and location within the city.
 - Democracy vouchers spurred a 500% increase in the number of unique donors, driven largely by small contributions, over the first three election cycles that vouchers were used.
 - Democracy voucher users were more likely to vote than other registered voters (even after accounting for prior levels of engagement). One study of

the 2017 election found that after using a voucher, low propensity voters became 7.4 times more likely to vote, while previous nonvoters became 10.2 times more likely to vote.

- *[Additional point] This motion also calls for the exploration of a hybrid public financing program based upon Democracy Vouchers where raising a certain amount of funds through Democracy Vouchers could result in the award of a grant, or multiple grants, to achieve full public financing, similar to the gubernatorial races in Arizona, Massachusetts and Maine. Exploring this idea alongside democracy vouchers will help contribute to the conversation about concrete paths towards full public financing.*
- **We believe that the time is right to take another step forward with our city's campaign finance system—and ensure that even more Angelenos have an opportunity to make their voices heard.**
 - A functioning democracy requires the engagement of everyday people, as voters, donors, and candidates.
 - Exploring the feasibility of establishing a democracy vouchers system in Los Angeles is a great first step towards building an inclusive and multi-racial democracy in Los Angeles powered by small donors
- **We understand the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Reform has a lot on its plate, and we hope that you find the time to consider this item. Thank you again to all the co-presenters, those who seconded the motion, and everyone who has taken time to meet with us.**