



Dear XXX

The first goal of the Neighborhood Council System is to “Promote public participation in City governance and decision making processes so that government is more responsive to local needs and requests. ...”¹

We, the DLANC Board, have identified structural impediments within our district that make public engagement more difficult for our residents than those in other parts of our City. These impediments depress civic engagement and voter turnout, and are in conflict with DLANC’s first goal, thus, it is the sentiment of this board that they should be eagerly addressed.

Canvassing is a vital part of the American political process. Often, the lack of accessibility and the limited amount of time candidates have available for canvassing large areas have resulted in less efforts from campaigns to reach downtown constituents in comparison to other areas that structurally provide a more personable experience when connecting with constituents by the ease of going door-door and handing out campaign materials. The multi-story apartment complexes that the vast majority of our residents call home are mostly inaccessible to canvassers for political candidates. Our density, which ought to offer candidates for political office an opportunity to quickly and efficiently reach out to Downtown residents, instead creates a huge barrier to the political engagement and participation of our residents.

Los Angeles is a city of renters. Over 64% of households in our city rent.² In Downtown, that figure eclipses 90%, almost entirely multi-family dwellings. It is vital that the voices of these renters be given the same weight as any other resident of Los Angeles and yet the lack of access to most apartment buildings means that renters can be the most deprived of electoral engagement and information. Across California only 33% of likely voters are renters and 69% of unregistered voters are renters.³ These findings urge us to consider every option we can to bring people into the political process. Other places with similar structural challenges such as

¹ https://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Plan_Amended_12-18-131.pdf

² <https://la.curbed.com/2018/8/9/17665124/los-angeles-homeowner-rate-renter-population>

³ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-likely-voters/>

Minnesota and Ontario, Canada⁴ have adopted Right to Canvass models that have been proven to be effective in promoting voter representation.

While the built environment of the DLANC district makes a Right to Canvass a present and pressing need for our community, it's important for the City Council to also consider now what political participation will look like as we move toward a future where more parts of the city will look like Downtown. Providing a Right to Canvass will serve to encourage political participation across our city and strengthen our democratic process.

The DLANC board hereby advises the Los Angeles City Council in conjunction with the City Attorney's Office to identify successful Right to Canvass models and explore the feasibility of implementing a similar ordinance for the City of Los Angeles, and also to instruct the City Clerk's Office to provide a report on how they might administer such program.

Sincerely,

Patti Berman
President

Mac McCarthy
Government Liaison Chair

⁴ <https://www.elections.on.ca/en/political-entities-in-ontario/canvassers-and-surveys.html>