



# REPORT TO COUNCIL

## City of Sacramento

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www.CityofSacramento.org

February 16, 2010

Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

**Title: Report Back: Charter Reform Package**

**Location/Council District: Citywide**

**Recommendation:** Council review of a Charter Reform Package for the June 2010 Ballot including: 1) Executive Mayor modified from the Strong Mayor Initiative; 2) adoption of an Independent Budget Analyst Ordinance instead of putting on the ballot; 3) creation of an Ethics Committee; 4) inclusion of Term Limits for Mayor and Council; and 5) voter re-approval of reform (also known as sunset).

**Contact:** Kunal Merchant, Chief of Staff, (916) 808-5300, Office of the Mayor

**Presenters:** Kunal Merchant

**Department:** Office of the Mayor

**Division:** N/A

**Organization No:** 0700

### **Description/Analysis**

#### **Issue:**

Modernization of the City Charter has been a consistent topic of discussion across the city for several years. The Charter remains largely unchanged for nine decades, despite significant changes in the size, complexion and complexity of the city.

Charter reform has become a particularly prominent topic of public debate in the past fifteen months. During this period, the Council and public have discussed several potential areas for change, including the city's governance structure, oversight of city finances, and system of checks and balances.

Since December 2008, citizens have contributed to this debate through diverse avenues. Through a public initiative, 52,062 citizens supported companion proposals to transition to a Mayor-Council governance structure and create an Independent Budget

Analyst. The Mayor and Council voted to create a Charter Review Commission of citizen volunteers, who evaluated the potential charter changes from April 2009 to January 2010. The Council itself has taken up the topic of charter reform on multiple occasions, adding further insights and ideas to the discourse.

The proposed Collaborative Charter Reform Package represents a culmination of this dialogue, drawing upon recommendations put forth via the petition process, charter review committee, and Council discussion. Specifically, the package proposes:

1. Establishment of an "Executive Mayor" (Mayor-Council) form of government
2. Creation of an Independent Budget Analyst
3. Term Limits for the Mayor and Council
4. Creation of an independent Ethics Committee
5. Voter re-approval for proposed charter changes

In addition, the new package will resolve issues raised in previous staff reports regarding creation of a ninth district and residual powers.

**Policy Considerations:**

If approved by voters, the proposal would result in several changes to the City Charter that would impact the city's governance structure and system of checks and balances.

**Environmental Considerations:** None.

**Sustainability Considerations:** None.

**Commission/Committee Action:** None.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

Discussion of this proposal and its placement before voters represents a natural extension of the ongoing charter reform discussion. On August 6, 2009, Council reasoned that voters deserve the next available opportunity to vote on the ballot initiative – June 8, 2010. Similarly, on February 2, 2010, Council passed another intent motion for the Independent Budget Analyst initiative to be placed on June 2010. Voters who participated in the ballot initiative, charter review commission, and Council discussions all deserve the opportunity to weigh in, either favorably or unfavorably, with this collaborative charter reform package at the earliest opportunity available.

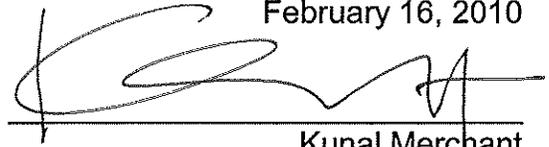
**Financial Considerations:** This discussion item has no cost. Should the item be approved and placed on the ballot, it would share in the \$104,000 required to place a city-wide initiative on the June 8, 2010 ballot.

**Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD):** Not applicable.

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Respectfully Submitted by:



Kunal Merchant  
Chief of Staff

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**Attachments**

1 Presentation

To Be Delivered

TBD