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October 21, 2016

VIA U.S. MAIL

Mr. Scott J. Svonkin
President, Board of Trustees
Los Angeles Community College District
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dr. Francisco C. Rodriguez
Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Re: Demand for Compliance with California Voting Rights Act

Dear Mr. Svonkin and Dr. Rodriguez:

We have received complaints from Latino voters in the Los Angeles Community College District that the use of an at-large election system for the election of trustees results in Latino vote dilution and prevents Latino voters from electing candidates of their choice. We reviewed demographic and electoral information pertaining to your jurisdiction with particular attention to the prohibitions of the California Voting Right Act of 2001 (“CVRA”). Based on our investigation, we believe that the Los Angeles Community College District is in violation of the CVRA and must convert to a by-district election system.

The CVRA, California Elections Code § 14027, states in relevant part:

An at-large method of election may not be imposed or applied in a manner that impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election, as a result of the dilution or the abridgment of the rights of voters who are members of a protected class...

Latino residents of the Los Angeles Community College District are a “protected class” within the meaning of the CVRA. U.S. Census population data shows that Latinos constitute 36% of the citizen voting age population of your district. However, it appears that there is only one Latino member of the

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seven-member Board of Trustees, Ernest H. Moreno. Based on our review of election returns and demographic information, we believe that the lack of success of Latino candidates results from the inability of Latino voters to elect candidates of choice due to racially polarized voting among the electorate, and that continued use of at-large elections therefore violates the CVRA. We demand that the Board convert its at-large election system to a district-based electoral system under Education Code § 5019.

We request your response to this demand by November 4, 2016. In the absence of a satisfactory response, our clients will be forced to seek judicial relief in the form of an action to obtain an order converting the election system from at-large to by-district, together with other relief provided for in the CVRA, including an award of litigation and expert witness costs, and attorneys' fees. The District can avoid the imposition of a judicially-mandated plan, including district maps designed or approved by the Court, by taking appropriate action without the filing of litigation.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Barragan
Staff Attorney
MALDEF

MJB/yp

cc: Sydney K. Kamlager, First Vice President (via U.S. mail)
Mike Fong, Second Vice President (via U.S. mail)
Mike Eng, Board Member (via U.S. mail)
Andra Hoffman, Board Member (via U.S. mail)
Ernest H. Moreno, Board Member (via U.S. mail)
Nancy Pearlman, Board Member (via U.S. mail)