



July 1, 2021

**TO:** LOCSD Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Ron Munds, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item 3A – 07/01/2021 Board Meeting**  
Free and Fair Elections in SLO County

### **DESCRIPTION**

On June 21, 2021, the District received a communication (attached) from the Women's March of San Luis Obispo Organizers expressing that the process to select an interim Clerk-Recorder must be transparent with the expectation that an impartial and apolitical Clerk-Recorder be appointed and that elections in general must continue to maximize the access to voting. The communication urges local elected officials to communicate, to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), their collective viewpoint on these issues. This report outlines the key points that could be included in a correspondence if the Board decides it is prudent to send a letter.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

***Motion: I move that the Board direct staff and the Board President to draft and send a letter to the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors based on the key points agreed upon by the Board Members.***

### **DISCUSSION**

Since the November 2020 general elections, there has been a lot of focus on how elections are conducted which has created wide-ranging controversy at the national, state and local levels.

With the recent highly publicized Board of Supervisor's meeting where there was extensive public comment challenging the integrity of San Luis Obispo County's 2020 local elections and subsequently, the resignation of the Clerk-Recorder, the Women's March San Luis Obispo Organizers is requesting that individuals and local governments communicate to the BOS that the procedures and management of elections are non-partisan therefore the person appointed by the BOS to assume the role of the interim Clerk-Recorder must be apolitical and impartial. Additionally, since County residents have enjoyed seamless elections with maximum access to voting opportunities for decades, the request includes a reiteration for the continuation of this access to the voting opportunities in order to maintain continued confidence in our elections.

If the Board chooses to submit a letter to the BOS, the following key points of the letter be as follows:

- Fair elections conducted in a transparent, professional and non-partisan manner are the cornerstones of our democracy.
- The interim Clerk-Recorder must be apolitical and impartial.
- County residents must continue to have maximum access to voting opportunities in order to maintain continued confidence in the election process.

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**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact associated with the recommendation made in this report.

**Attachment**

Communication from the Women's March San Luis Obispo Organizers

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**From:** Andrea Chmelik <andrea.chmelikova@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 1:37 PM  
**Subject:** Protect Free and Fair Elections in SLO County

Dear Elected Representative,

The following letter has been submitted to the press and will be distributed via Women's March SLO website and social media. We sincerely hope that you will join our call for a unanimous appointment of a non-partisan interim Clerk-Recorder who will instill confidence in San Luis Obispo County's democratic election process. Following the baseless election fraud claims and the subsequent departure of Mr. Tommy Gong, we urge you to take part in strengthening our democracy by supporting transparent, professional and non-partisan appointment of Mr. Gong's replacement.

—  
June 21, 2021

Protect Free and Fair Elections in SLO County

Women's March San Luis Obispo organizers are deeply alarmed by recent drastic changes to our electoral system. Today we urge each person in our County to show up and speak up for safe, fair and fully enfranchised elections.

Four years ago during the first Women's March in San Luis Obispo, thousands took to the streets unified in defending a more just and equitable democracy. Since the beginning, this movement has been about creating lasting change. We knew then what we know now - that every single voice makes a difference.

Now, as we watch local elections be purposefully eroded, it's up to each of us to show up and speak up in numbers too large to ignore.

In November 2020, the SLO County Board of Supervisors voted to raise their own campaign limits to almost four times the limit set by the California State Legislature, thereby opening local elections to higher limits than even our state representatives.

Next, when presented with the choice to expand voting access, the same Board of Supervisors went the opposite direction, selecting the most restrictive voting model possible for San Luis Obispo County.

Most recently, in tandem with a fringe trend to sow distrust in American democracy, the validity of the San Luis Obispo County 2020 elections results were baselessly challenged. As part of the disinformation campaign, our County Clerk-Recorder Tommy Gong was attacked with hateful, racist, anti-Asian rhetoric. Some went as far as to claim Mr. Gong, a third generation American, might be a Chinese Communist. Subsequently, Mr. Gong stepped down and will leave our County.

With the Clerk-Recorder seat vacant, it's up to the Board of Supervisors to appoint a new official who will plan, implement and supervise our upcoming San Luis Obispo County elections. It's critically important to make our voices heard in this process. We must make it known that we expect an impartial and apolitical Clerk-Recorder to be appointed.

Ahead of us are urgent issues, such as redistricting, a recall, and a general election, that includes choosing a new Clerk-Recorder. Each will be incredibly complex and extremely challenging. Together they will have a lasting impact on

democracy.

We marched, we organized, we ran, we voted. Now is the time for each and every one of us to defend the cornerstone of our democracy and demand fair elections conducted in a transparent, professional and non-partisan manner.

We ask the SLO County Board of Supervisors to unanimously appoint a non-partisan interim Clerk-Recorder who will continue to instill confidence in San Luis Obispo County's democratic process. Join this call by reaching out to your City, County, and State representatives. Make sure your voice is heard. A powered up democracy requires our involvement.

Respectfully,

Women's March San Luis Obispo Organizers

Dawn Addis, Andrea Chmelik, Terry Parry, Pat Harris, Jen Ford, Rita Casaverde, Gail Bunting

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Andrea Chmelik

[www.AndreaChmelik.com](http://www.AndreaChmelik.com)