



WINNETKA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

PO Box 3692, Winnetka, CA 91306

www.winnetkanc.com



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July 14, 2008

Greig Smith
Councilmember, CD 12
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 405
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Smith,

I am contacting you to let you know how disappointed the Winnetka Neighborhood Council (WNC) was in the recent vote by the City Council to place a ballot initiative on the November ballot to approve a tax levy of \$36.00 per parcel for gang prevention.

Our Board voted unanimously to authorize me to let you know that we do not support this measure.

We hope that you will understand that this vote does not mean we do not support efforts to decrease gang activity in the city of Los Angeles. The WNC recognizes that we have a gang problem in this city and that that problem encroaches on our very own community. However, we also recognize that the current gang funds don't seem to have any impact in our community. We continue to see an increase in gang graffiti. Our community has also seen its share of gang related crime.

Our decision not to support this measure, like other proposed tax increases, has to do with the fact that we feel we can no longer support tax increases when we have no assurances that the funds will be used for what they are intended for. Far too often we see tax or fee increases that are co-opted for other uses than what they were intended for.

Last year the Mayor pushed through a trash tax, excuse me fee, on the basis that it would be used for additional police officers. To date we are unaware of any increase in police presence in Winnetka. In fact, we have a brand new police station with no additional police officers to staff it. Where is the money going?

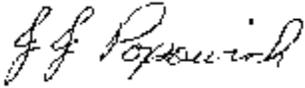
The DWP rate hikes that were recently passed were intended to ensure that the DWP could upgrade infrastructure and ensure that they can continue to provide services to our citizens. Yet there is no assurance that it will be used for that purpose. Our concern is that the funds will be illegally transferred to the City's General Fund or to pay for last year's outrageous 26% pay raises.

This kind of mismanagement of funds leads us to feel that we simply can't support any more requests for additional revenues. The WNC Board feels that we need to see some concrete, iron clad language in all future ballot measures that ensures the funds can only be used for the purposes it was requested. We also feel that the City has to prove that it can responsibly manage the funds it has before it requests more.

Finally, the Board wanted me to stress that the City Council must start to consider the stresses additional taxation places on its citizens. With the increasingly poor economy we cannot continue to reach into the pocket books of citizens for answers. We are surrounded by houses in foreclosure. We are beset by astronomical gas prices. We are witnessing bank failures and job losses. At what point do we realize there simply is no more money? Tax payers are a finite resource and we had better start to conserve that resource.

It is our understanding that you voted in favor of this measure. We encourage you to reconsider your support of the measure and actively work to ensure that it is defeated at the ballot box.

Sincerely,



JJ Popowich
President, WNC

Winnetka Neighborhood Council

WNC

Celebrating Diversity with Unity
and Dedication to the Community