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October 20, 2021

Mike Feuer  
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Dear Mr. Feuer:

This law firm represents the Honorable Mark Ridley-Thomas.

I write to express my deep concern over the illegality and inappropriateness of the motion by Council President Martinez and Councilmember O’Farrell to suspend Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas from his position, which was agendized yesterday morning for special consideration today by the City Council.

In a letter sent to Council President Martinez and members of the City Council on Monday, October 18, 2021, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas made it clear that he would voluntarily step back—not step down—from Council and Committee meeting in order to demonstrate respect for the body and to avert potential distractions.

The motion to be heard today, authored by Council President Martinez and seconded by President Pro Tempore O’Farrell, is not just rash, it is without legal basis: Simply put, there are no allegations that involve Councilmember Ridley-Thomas’s work as a City official.

The Los Angeles City Charter is unambiguous: Section 211 authorizes suspension only in cases where a councilmember is charged with an offense “related to a violation of official duties as described in Section 207(c).” Section 207(c) limits such action to charges “involving a[n alleged] violation of official duties.” Thus, there is no basis for invoking Section 211 because it is undisputed that Councilmember Ridley-Thomas is not being accused of a crime that relates to a violation of his official duties as a Councilmember—the charges concern alleged actions that significantly predate his election

to the City Council. Suspending him would be an unlawful act by the Council, and would be immediately subject to challenge in court.

Moreover, there are significant differences between this accusation and those against previous Councilmembers who have been indicted of crimes. Unlike the others, the allegations against Councilmember Ridley-Thomas, which are false and will be refuted, make no assertion that he had received any personal gain. Furthermore, the contracts which are the subject of alleged wrongdoing were not doled out in a back room. They were standard contracts voted on in full view of the public and approved by the full Board of Supervisors. After allegations were first made, in 2018, the County of Los Angeles went back and did a comprehensive review to ensure that there was no wrongdoing, and indeed none was found.

Unlike previous Councilmembers, who either plead guilty or who abandoned the job as soon as allegations were made, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has not only declared his intention to keep doing his work, but sought to facilitate a means for facilitating this in a manner that was respectful of his colleagues.

Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has confirmed his commitment to continuing to serve, and that service does not only take place in City Hall chambers or exclusively on meeting days. It is work done on behalf of one's district and constituents. Those constituents do not deserve to be abandoned or disenfranchised. Indeed, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has every intent of continuing to represent his constituents and is prepared to do it as follows:

- Respectfully weigh in with the City Council on policy issues that impact the 10<sup>th</sup> Council District and the City at large; Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has offered to not formally vote on items, but will still make his position known.
- Ensure that his constituents continue to receive stellar constituent services. The need for homeless outreach, road repairs, mobility improvements, clean-ups and other municipal services does not go away. In fact, in a district that is one of the most densely populated and has the oldest infrastructure in the City, these needs continue to be pressing.
- Continue to work with community organizations, policy entities and other stakeholders to identify and advance strategies that address our homeless and housing crises. In his District, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has initiated partnerships with homeless outreach providers, as well as community-based organizations, non-profits and business groups to model important partnerships to abate these crises, and that work must continue.
- Proceed with spearheading community development including revitalizing Leimert Park Village and Marlton Square—two assets in the heart of South Los Angeles—which should not be stalled, as well as oversee infrastructure improvements, including of City-owned assets which require

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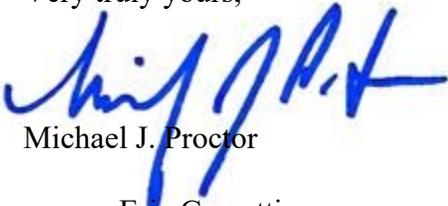
maintenance and upgrades. Councilmember Ridley-Thomas will continue to oversee and implement these improvements, as well as champion a variety of programs that will improve the quality of life for his constituents.

Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has the strong support of countless colleagues, constituents and Angelenos who respect and appreciate the work he has done over his past 30 years in elected office. Moreover, his constituents deserve to be represented, not marginalized.

The City of Los Angeles should act as the law requires, and treat the Councilmember as presumed innocent unless proven otherwise.

I strongly urge you to advise the Council to either deny or remove from consideration the motion by Council to suspend Councilmember Ridley-Thomas. We are prepared to explore any and all legal action in this matter.

Very truly yours,



Michael J. Proctor

cc: Eric Garcetti  
Ron Galperin  
Gil Cedillo  
Paul Krekorian  
Bob Blumenfield  
Nithya Raman  
Paul Koretz  
Nury Martinez  
Monica Rodriguez  
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