



August 3, 2016

National Headquarters
MALDEF Nonprofit Center
634 S. Spring Street, 12th Fl.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
TEL: 213.629.2512
Fax: 213.629.0266

**VIA FACSIMILE: (562) 943-3666
& U.S. MAIL**

**Atlanta
Program Office**
500 West Lanier Avenue
Suite 908
Fayetteville, GA 30215
Tel: 678.559.1071
Fax: 678.559.1079

Steve De Ruse, Mayor
City of La Mirada
City Hall
13700 La Mirada Blvd.
La Mirada, CA 90638

**Chicago
Regional Office**
11 East Adams Street
Suite 700
Chicago, IL 60603
TEL: 312.427.0701
Fax: 312.427.0691

Re: Demand for Compliance with California Voting Rights Act

Dear Mr. De Ruse:

**Los Angeles
Regional Office**
634 S. Spring Street,
11th Fl.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
TEL: 213.629.2512
Fax: 213.629.0266

We have received complaints from Latino voters in the City of La Mirada that the use of an at-large election system for the election of city council members 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 City of La Mirada is in violation of the CVRA and must convert to a by-district election system.

**Sacramento
Program Office**
1512 14th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel: 916.444.3031
Fax: 916.444.7207

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

**San Antonio
Regional Office**
110 Broadway
Suite 300
San Antonio, TX 78205
TEL: 210.224.5476
Fax: 210.224.5382

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...

**Washington, D.C.
Regional Office**
1016 16th Street, NW
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202.293.2828

Latino residents of the City of La Mirada 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 La Mirada. However, none of the five current members of the City Council is Latino, and with one exception, there have been no Latino city councilmembers since the city’s incorporation. Based on our review of election returns and demographic information, we believe that the lack of success of Latinos 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 therefore demand that the City

Steve De Ruse, Mayor

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convert its at-large election system to a district-based electoral system. Under the authority of Government Code § 34886, the City Council can effectuate that conversion by passage of a resolution, and we demand that it do so without delay.

We request your response to this demand by August 17, 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 City 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt J. Barragan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew J. Barragan
MALDEF

MJB/mg

cc: Ed Eng, May Pro Tem (via U.S. mail)
Pauline Deal, Council Member (via U.S. mail)
Lawrence P. Mowles, Council Member (via U.S. mail)
Andrew Sarega, Council Member (via U.S. mail)
James L. Markman, City Attorney (via U.S. mail)