

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

1/11/2017 – Curtis Hall, Sacramento

RESOLUTION 2018-03

Calling for Greater Transparency in Appointments to fill Elected Office Vacancies

WHEREAS, It is critical that an appointment process that removes from voters their right to elect their representative be conducted with the utmost transparency, giving the public a realistic opportunity to participate meaningfully in the selection and appointment of their elected representative, by, at a minimum, informing the public that a vacancy exists, how to apply, who the applicants are, and what their qualifications are; and

WHEREAS, The 2016 platform of the California Democratic Party states that Democrats will demand “transparency and implementation of accountability measures for all [...] governing boards,” and to that end Sacramento Democrats recognize that greater transparency and accountability are needed in the appointment processes used to fill vacancies in elected offices; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the Elk Grove City Council filled a vacancy on the City Council by appointing a person who was not an applicant and who therefore had not been fully vetted by the public or even by the City Council prior to his appointment; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the Twin Rivers Unified School District, citing an inapplicable exception to the California Public Records Act (CPRA), refused to release the scoring sheets used by the Board of Education to score and rank applicants and ultimately determine whom to appoint, thereby denying the public of its right to know how its representatives voted and the reasons for their decision; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the Sacramento County Board of Education filled a vacancy on its Board by appointment, but did not publicly post either the names of the applicants or their application documents, thereby denying the public any meaningful opportunity to discover who the applicants were and their qualifications, and only allowed applicants to submit applications by hard copy, in-person, or by mail — thereby evading the need to produce those documents to the

public in an electronic format because the CPRA requires that public records kept by the agency in an electronic format have to be i in that format only when so requested by the public pursuant to the CPRA; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District posted notice of a vacancy on its Board of Directors but never posted an application deadline and later closed the application window without any public notice, thereby creating unnecessary uncertainty for interested applicants; and

WHEREAS, There is no central place where notices of vacancies in local office are posted, which makes it exceedingly difficult for members of the public to apply for appointment or to participate in the appointment process.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Democratic Party of Sacramento County calls for greater transparency in appointment processes used to appoint vacancies in local elected offices, and urges, at a minimum:

1. Prompt public posting of notices of vacancies online with a specific application deadline and the means by which interested people can apply;
2. Accepting of applications by email or other electronic submission;
3. Prompt online posting of all applicant names and application documents for the public to see, immediately after the application period closes;
4. Notice of how members of the public can provide input on who should be appointed, whether by public comment, email, or online comment submission, etc.;
5. Conducting applicant interviews and public comment during times that do not limit the ability of working people to either apply or participate in the appointment process (i.e., not during the morning or early afternoon);
6. Consideration and appointment of only those people who applied, were vetted, and on whom the public has had an opportunity to provide input;
7. The release of all scoring sheets and notes used to score, rank, or otherwise determine which applicant to appoint.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Democratic Party of Sacramento County proposes that all local governments in Sacramento County be required to notify the County Registrar of Voters

when a vacancy arises in one of their elected offices, and that the County Registrar publish that notice on its website.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Democratic Party of Sacramento County supports the adoption of such transparency policies by statutory mandate or by each local district acting in its individual capacity, and authorizes the Chair and Executive Board to advocate for adoption of such transparency policies in the manner they deem proper.

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Sponsor: Andres Ramos